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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE;

HIS LIFE,

HIS WORKS, AND HIS TEACHING.

BY

G. W. RUSDEN.

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Beneath a star-ypointed pyramid?
Dear son of memory! Great heir of fame!
What needs't thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument;
For whilst, to the shame of slow endeavouring art,
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving,
And, so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

Milton.

MELBOURNE:
MELVILLE & MULLEN, 262 AND 264 COLLINS STREET.
1903.

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PREFACE.

So much has been written about Shakespeare that it would be vain to hope that at this time another writer can add anything which is new and true. Yet it seems possible to arrange known facts (now scattered in many publications) in such a manner as to present a picture, more accurate than some which have been published about the man himself, and those creations of his imagination, which have enriched the literature, not only of his own country but of the world.

To myself, who complete on this day my 84th year, he has been a cherished companion over "Ocean's roaring tides," and in every continent and many islands of the globe.

My debt to him is one which can never be repaid, but I hope that the authorities at Stratford-on-Avon will permit this humble tribute to find a place in their Library.

I may be asked what hope I can reasonably entertain that I can add anything of worth to Shakespearian literature. My answer must be that the sense of duty done is grateful to the mind, and that many friends have urged me to the task as one which I ought to do.

For the rest, if any profit should accrue from the sale of this work it is bequeathed for the purpose of founding

Shakespeare Scholarships in seminaries of that Church of England of which Shakespeare was a member, viz., at Trinity College, Melbourne, and at Grammar Schools in the colony of Victoria, which has been my home for more than half a century.

No apology need be made for including copious extracts from Shakespeare in this volume. A work on "Shakespeare's Life, Works, and Teaching" would be a deformity, if not intolerable, if framed without ample proof, in his own words, of the character of his teaching.

G. W. RUSDEN.

9th July, 1903.

ATHENÆUM CLUB,
PALL MALL, LONDON;
AND
COTMANDENE,
MELBOURNE.

RUSDEN'S "WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE."

PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

This work was written by the author during the last few months of his life; and he died soon after it was set up in type. Perhaps few persons could have written such a book when weakened by illness, suffering from pain and slowly dying. The friend named in his Will as Mr. Rusden's literary executor, on perusing the volume, found some few matters requiring correction; and it has accordingly been held over to make such emendations as, it was believed, the author himself would certainly have made had he lived. Under such circumstances, instead of being surprised at the errors noted, one may indeed wonder that they are so few.

CORRIGENDA.

Page 138.—15th line from top:

Isabella's speech attributed in error to Claudio.

Page 131.—12th line from bottom:

The author says,

> "In the old legend *all* the daughters of Lear behaved unnaturally to their father. What a transmutation was effected by Shakespeare when he created Cordelia!"

Page 208.—15th line:

He also says,

> "By creating Cordelia Shakespeare redeemed the drama from loathsomeness, and, for us, in the language of Professor Dowden, the earth is made more beautiful by her life and by her death."

Note.—In the principal sources from which we get the story of Lear and his daughters, Cordelia is always the noble character and affectionate daughter that Shakespeare makes her, though the

end is somewhat less tragic than in his play. In the histories, she restores her father to his throne; and, after his death, succeeds him in the Kingdom. She reigns five years, and is then dispossessed and captured by her two nephews; and, in despair, kills herself.

The story is said to have been first told in English by Layamon in his "Brut," about 1205; and it is thus contained in the following works:—

1. Geoffrey of Monmouth,
   "Historia Britonum," Book 2, Chapter 2, p. 15.
2. Layamon's "Brut" (1847 Edition by Sir F. K. Madden), Vol. 1, p. 124.
3. "Gesta Romanorum"—Introduction. About 1473.
4. Fabyan's "Chronicle Concorduance of Historyes" (Edition of 1811 by Sir Henry Ellis).
5. "Hollinshed's History."
6. Spenser's "Faerie Queene,"
   Book 2, Canto 10, Stanzas 27-33.
7. "Mirrour for Magistrates,"
   Queen Cordela, an historical poem by John Higins, 1574.
8. "Chronicle History of King Leir." About 1593.

Page 307.—First word on page:

For "Iago," read *Iachimo.*

Page 337.—3rd line from bottom:

"Where *has* thou been preserved?" to read: Where *hast* thou been preserved?

Page 357.—10th line:

For "marriage blessing," read marriage-blessing.

Page 372.—8th line from top:

(1) Delete parenthesis bracket before "Richard;"
(2) Insert comma before "Richard;"
(3) Insert comma between "Richard" and bracket.

Page 403.—7th line from bottom:

Delete comma after "any."

MELVILLE & MULLEN.

MELBOURNE,
9th May, 1905.

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CHAPTER I.

Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon.

Biographies often commence with genealogy; and the ancestry of Shakespeare is made known to us for a few generations by means of an application made by himself and his father in 1596, for Royal permission to use "a coat-of-arms."*

In 1599 Queen Elizabeth granted the request, and it was announced as one of the reasons for the grant that Shakespeare's great great grandfather had been rewarded (by Henry VII.) by a grant of lands in Warwickshire for "valiant and faithful service" in the war which smote down Richard III. at Bosworth and made Richmond King.

Thus we know that for several generations Shakespeare's ancestors had belonged to the class which contained, not the noblemen, but some of the country gentlemen of England.

There were many families of Shakespeares in the midlands, and there were also some in Warwickshire before Shakespeare's ancestors settled there on the land granted by Henry VII.

Shakespeare's father, John Shakespeare, was a man of

* The motto assigned was Non sans droit; the shield "Gold on a bend sable, a spear of the first, and for his crest or cognizance a falcon, his wings displayed argent standing on a wreath of his colours, supporting a spear gold steeled as aforesaid."

business in Stratford in the middle of the 16th century, and as he dealt with various commodities, commentators have variously designated him as a glover, a woolstapler, a butcher, &c.

There are many places in the world where active men have combined different occupations in one place of business; but to select one of these occupations and call such a man a glover, or hatter, or woolstapler is unreasonable, and may be deceitful.

In 1557 John Shakespeare married Mary Arden, a member of a family holding a high position in the social scale. William Shakespeare, his first son, was christened at Stratford on the 26th April, 1564; and the 23rd April, the day of St. George, has been accepted as Shakespeare's birthday. In that year the scourge, called then "The Plague," raged in Stratford, but though it slew its hecatombs, it spared the life of William Shakespeare, who was to be the glory of his native land.

Much has been written about his education, and some of his detractors have contended that he probably learned little more than reading and writing at the Grammar School of Edward VI. existing at the time in Stratford. The contention is inane, for children learned to read and write before they were admitted to the Grammar Schools, whose teaching, so far as it can be traced, was mainly directed to Greek and Latin classics. There are probably no extant records of the age at which Shakespeare ceased to study at the Stratford School. One biographer* guesses that when Shakespeare's father was beset by financial difficulties, his son William "about the age of thirteen" "finished his scholastic education." But the biographer cites no authority to confirm his conjecture.

* A. C. Calmour: Facts and Fiction about Shakespeare. Stratford-on-Avon, 1894.

Mr. Sidney Lee in his compendious "Life of William Shakespeare"* surmises that John Shakespeare's "financial difficulties" caused his son's "removal from school at an unusually early age. Probably in 1577, when he was thirteen, he was enlisted by his father in an effort to restore his decaying fortunes."†

It is always wise to "keep probability in view," but it ought not to be forgotten that some things deemed probable are by no means true.

Mr. Calmour himself and Mr. Lee also furnish facts which make it probable that Shakespeare's father, as a zealous supporter of the drama, would not be inclined to deprive his son of the power to prosecute his studies at the school which was close to his own house, and at which the education was free. The aspirations of the boy may have made classical study an object of his ambition. He may, during his career as scholar, have written a portion, at least, of his Venus and Adonis, which in dedicating it to the Earl of Southampton he declared to be "the first heir of my invention."

If such fanciful speculations as have been indulged in by detractors of Shakespeare were permissible for his friends, it might be surmised that his father, a patron of the drama, and conscious of the proclivities of his son, encouraged his literary aspirations and did what he could to prolong his period of study.‡

It is not mere surmise that John Shakespeare patronized

---

* London: Smith, Elder and Co., London, 1898 (p. 18).

† Life of Shakespeare, 1898 (p. 18).

‡ As a corollary to this sentence it is pleasing to note that though John Shakespeare became poor, and was, sometimes vainly, prosecuted for small debts at Stratford, the time soon arrived when Shakespeare became prosperous in London, and that afterwards there were no records of his father's impecuniosity.

the drama at Stratford while he was a man of importance there.

In 1565 he became an alderman; in 1568 he became High Bailiff, the official who exercised at Stratford the functions of the Mayors in other boroughs.*

Records have been preserved which prove that while Bailiff, John Shakespeare patronized the theatre. Mr. Sidney Lee states that under him "the corporation for the first time entertained actors at Stratford. The Queen's Company and the Earl of Worcester's Company each received from John Shakespeare an official welcome." †

It cannot be thought improbable, perhaps it would be unreasonable to doubt, that a man possessing such tastes would make some effort or even sacrifice to promote the cultivation of the mental powers of his son, who is believed to have entered the Grammar School in 1571.

No precise records of the course of study there have been discovered; but those of another (Ed. VI.) Grammar School in a southern county prove that Greek and Latin Classics were the subjects chiefly taught. In one of them it was prescribed that at least once in two years the pupils should act, in the original tongue, a play of Æschylus, Sophocles, or other Greek tragedian.

Ben Jonson's line in his poem ("To the memory of my beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare") "And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek," is often quoted as if it were Jonson's full and final verdict disparaging Shakespeare. But such reference to it is unjust both to Shakespeare and to Jonson; to Jonson because he as a university man only alluded slightingly to a low standard; to Shakespeare because in the same poem Jonson wrote—

* Calmour (p. 9).

† Life of Shakespeare, p. 10.

Soul of the age!
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!
My Shakespeare, rise; I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
A little further off to make thee room;
Thou art a monument without a tomb;
And art alive still while thy book doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek
From thence to honour thee I would not seek
For names; but call for thundering Æschylus,
Euripides and Sophocles to us
Pacurius, Accius, him of Cordova dead
To life again, to hear thy buskin tread
And shake a stage; or when thy socks were on
Leave thee alone for the comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.

. . . . .

Triumph my Britain! thou hast one to show
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!
Nature herself was proud of his designs,
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines,
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit;
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;
But antiquated and deserted lie
As they were not of Nature's family.
Yet I must not give Nature all, thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part:
For though the poet's matter nature be
His art doth give the fashion. . . . .

. . . .

Look, how the father's face
Lives in his issue; even so the race
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines
In his well-turned and true-filed lines

In each of which he seems to shake a lance
As brandished at the eyes of ignorance.
Sweet swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza, and our James!
But stay! I see thee in the hemisphere
Advanced, and made a constellation there;—
Shine forth, thou star of poets, and with rage
Or influence, chide or cheer the drooping stage,
Which, since thy flight from hence, has mourned like night,
And despairs day, but for thy Volume's light!*

Much has been written about Shakespeare's schooldays. and inferences have been drawn with regard to them which do not appear to be warranted by some established facts.

Interesting articles, written by Mr. Spencer Baynes, appeared in Fraser's Magazine in November, 1879, and in January and May, 1880.

After citing the "Ludus Literarius or Grammar School" (1612) by John Brindsley (head master of the Grammar School de la Zouche in 1612), he speaks of a "celebrated Schoolmaster Charles Hoole" whose book (published in 1612) he describes as "full of illustrations of the actual teaching of the Grammar Schools of the time," and "supplying indirectly valuable evidence as to the state of school-teaching in Shakespeare's day."

---

* The quotation from Jonson's eulogium (published with the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's Plays, in 1623) is somewhat long, but it was necessary to include it in this volume, and there is a fitness in placing it near the record of Shakespeare's classical studies.

Amongst the eccentricities of the present day is a suggestion that Jonson knew that not Shakespeare but some other man wrote Shakespeare's plays. I do not intend to deal with the eccentricity in these pages, but I may apply to it two lines from Shakespeare—

"Folly in fools bears not so strong a note
As foolery in the wise when wit doth dote."

vide Appendix.

After enumerating the books used in the Grammar Schools of the time, Mr. Baynes adds that—

"from these various sources we may form a trustworthy general estimate of Shakespeare's course of instruction during his schooldays.

"In the first year he would be occupied with the Accidence and Grammar. In his second, with the elements of Grammar he would read some manual of short phrases and familiar dialogues, and these committed to memory would be colloquially employed in the work of the school; in his third year, if not before, he would take up Cato's Maxims and Æsop's Fables; in the fourth, while continuing the Fables, he would read the Eclogues of Mantuanus, parts of Ovid, some of Cicero's Epistles, and probably one of his shorter treatises; in his fifth year he would continue the reading of Ovid's Metamorphoses, with parts of Virgil and Terence; and in the sixth Horace, Plautus, and probably part of Juvenal and Persius, with some of Cicero's Orations and Seneca's Tragedies."

Mr. Baynes (after vividly showing how Shakespeare, in his first comedy, introduced on the English stage the quaintness of a pedagogue in the person of Holofernes) adds that—

"in the next stage of his school career Shakespeare would begin the reading of Ovid, parts of De Tristibus, and the Metamorphoses, and with Ovid he would take up the selected Epistles of Cicero, and the Eclogues of Baptista Mantuanus. The evidence on the last point is supplied by the well-known quotation from the Eclogues in 'Love's Labours Lost.'"

Speaking of Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, called by the author the "first heir of his invention," published in 1593, but probably written "before Shakespeare left Stratford for London" (a conclusion to which the author had arrived before he saw Mr. Baynes' articles), Mr. Baynes remarks that the lines on the title page from Ovid's Elegies—

Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua—

"are taken from a poem at which there existed at the time no English version." The name given by Shakespeare to the Fairy Queen, Titania, was then for the first

time introduced into English literature, and Mr. Baynes argues that—

"the important point to be noted is that Shakespeare clearly derived it from his study of Ovid in the original. It must have struck him in reading the text of the Metamorphoses, as it is not to be found in the only translation which existed in his day."

It is only just to Mr. Baynes and to Shakespeare himself to mention (at the close of these citations) that Mr. Baynes bids us to

"remember that in the very earliest poem we have from Shakespeare's pen the higher note of the modern world is clearly sounded—the note that Love is lord of all, and that love is something infinitely higher and more divine than the lawless vagrant passion which in pagan times passed under that name. (He then cites the lines)—

Call it not Love, for Love to heaven is fled
Since sweating Lust on earth usurped his name,
. . . . . .
Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,
But Lust's effect is tempest after sun;
Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain,
Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done;
Love surfeits not, Lust like a glutton dies;
Love is all truth, Lust full of forged lies."

The "note thus struck" in Shakespeare's first essay was "deepened in the Sonnets and developed through all the gracious range of higher female characters in the dramas." In the Mirandas, Portias, and Imogens of Shakespeare's dramas we have the "fadeless beauty and grace, the vivacity and intelligence, the gentleness and truth of perfect womanhood."

The pregnant suggestions of Mr. Baynes have not only been confirmed, but wrought into convincing proof by Mr. J. Churton Collins in the pages of the Fortnightly Review for April and May in 1903. He cites so many passages to prove Shakespeare's familiarity with the Greek Tragedies that only fragments of his important work can be produced here.

In the Persæ of Æschylus *κακον μὲν πρῶτον αγγέλλειν κακά* is echoed in Henry IV.—

> The first bringer of unwelcome news
> Hath but a losing office.

In Œdipus Colonus—*τά γ'εργα μου*
πεπονθοτ εστι μαλλον ἤ δεδρακότα he finds in Lear—

> I am a man more sinned against than sinning.

But the wealth of proof in Mr. Churton Collins' articles must be perused in his own pages.

If one might indulge in conjecture one might find in Æschylus a sentence which Shakespeare improved. When being riveted to the bleak mountain, Prometheus is asked if he is not afraid, and his answer—

> Τί δ'αν φοβοίμην ὦ θανεῖν οὐ μόρσιμον is immortal.

In Hamlet when the mortal is besought to abstain from following the Ghost, his reply—

> Why, what should be the fear?
> I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
> And for my soul, what can it do to that,
> Being a thing immortal as itself?—

seems a still greater conception, for it reveals in the mortal speaker his unshaken faith in the promise of God as to the immortality of his soul. Mr. J. Churton Collins writes (Fortnightly Review, April, 1903) that, with other Tragedies, the Prometheus Vinctus was published in England in 1567, with literal versions in Latin. He adds —"it is in itself improbable, almost to the point of being incredible, that Shakespeare should not have the curiosity to turn to them;" and that "the Latin of the literal versions is remarkably simple and lucid."

The striking similarity of the passage in Hamlet to the words of Prometheus commanded the attention of the author many years ago. Read with the assistance of Mr.

Churton Collins' learned articles which point out that it is "almost incredible" that Shakespeare had not seen the Prometheus Vinctus, it is indeed hard to believe that Shakespeare was unacquainted with the passage in Æschylus.

If it be objected that Shakespeare's originality is impugned by the thought of his borrowing, it is sufficient to say that he never shrank from borrowing if by so doing he could put the noblest ideal before his audience. Moreover, if in this instance he quoted, how immeasurably did he enrich the quotation!

Before quitting the subject of Shakespeare's education at the Stratford Grammar School a word ought to be said about his probable knowledge of Greek. Ben Jonson's line about Shakespeare's "small Latin and less Greek" has already been alluded to, and "it needs no ghost come from the grave" to tell us that the Latin and Greek acquired by Jonson at Cambridge might induce him to speak lightly of studies at the Stratford school. The curriculum at Stratford has not been handed down to us, but Mr. Baynes furnishes that of a contemporary school. After recording the progress in Latin of four forms, he shows that:—

The fifth form said one part in the Latin and another in the Greek Grammar together.

The sixth form continued their parts in the Greek Grammar, and formed a verb active at every part; they read the Greek Testament and they construed the Greek Testament into Latin.

The seventh form went on with the Greek Grammar . . . . they had their forenoon lessons in Isocrates, which they translated into Latin; their afternoon lessons were two days in Horace and two days in Seneca's Tragedies, both which they translated into English.

In the eighth form Hesiod was read in the morning, while Juvenal and Persius were construed in the afternoon.

(The ninth form was wholly occupied with Greek books).

Ben Jonson's statement that Shakespeare had some

Greek, and the above extracts, afford a clue as to Shakespeare's course of study, and lead to an inference (from the late period at which the study of Greek was undertaken) that Shakespeare's studies at Stratford were prolonged to a later period than some commentators have supposed.

It can scarcely be asserted that, while he was able to attend at the Stratford school, Shakespeare could be conceived to have been a dull scholar; and no records have been preserved as to the date of his leaving the school.

The fact that he had some "Greek" is recorded by Jonson; and thus the very phrase quoted from Jonson by Shakespeare's detractors, in order to asperse Shakespeare's memory, suggests, if it does not prove, that his studies at Stratford were continued for a longer period than has been assumed by some persons; for the study of Greek seems not to have been undertaken until proficiency in Latin had been attained. Like Balaam, Jonson has been called upon to curse; and, like Balaam's words, Jonson's, when examined closely, are found to be not a curse, but a blessing; as indeed Jonson's poem, already quoted, is sufficient to prove to any but a "bisson conspectuity."

Shakespeare's detractors may say to Jonson, when they examine Mr. Baynes' and Mr. Churton Collins' researches: —"We took thee to curse our enemy, and lo! thou hast blessed him altogether."

It cannot be denied that Jonson's poem may be summed up as a judgment that, in spite of a lack of University training, Shakespeare surpassed all writers, ancient or modern.*

---

* As a caution against undue modern pride, it should not be forgotten that the learned in such matters have arrived at the conclusion that, though we have only seven masterpieces of Æschylus, and the same number of Sophocles, no less than seventy of Æschylus, and the like number of Sophocles, have been devoured by ac-

It seems clear that if Mr. Baynes' and Mr. Churton Collins' researches and deductions can be relied upon, the stay of Shakespeare at the Stratford school must have been prolonged to a later date than has been assigned to it by Mr. Calmour and by Mr. Sidney Lee, viz., "probably when he was thirteen," and "about the age of thirteen."

They cite no rumour to vouch for such an assumption, and rumour itself is composed of surmises, jealousies, conjectures. Biography built upon it would be a tale "signifying nothing."

It would be easy to say that Shakespeare's father, a supporter of the drama, and not blind to the literary proclivities of his son, would do all that he could to promote his son's welfare, and would not cut short his school career; and that consequently the Greek, for which Ben Jonson gave Shakespeare credit, was acquired after the age of thirteen; seeing that by the curriculum in another Edward VI. Grammar School it could hardly have been acquired before. But to say such things does not prove them, and biography must content itself with recorded facts.*

These facts suggest that it would have been difficult for Shakespeare to acquire before he was thirteen years old the Greek he knew, and consequently that he probably acquired it afterwards.

At whatever period Shakespeare ceased to be a scholar, he could not have been very assiduous in devoting himself to the commercial business of his father, for he fell in love with Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a "†substantial yeoman" of Shottery, in the immediate vicinity of

cidents of time, and thus are lost to us. How thankful ought we to be that the invention of printing and the loving care of Shakespeare's "fellows, Heminge and Condell," have secured for us the masterpieces of Shakespeare!

* See Appendix II. † Mr. Sidney Lee. Life (p. 21).

Stratford, and was married to her in 1582, in which year he became eighteen years old.

His first child, Susanna, was baptized at Stratford in May 1583, and twin children, Hamnet and Judith Shakespeare, were christened there in February 1585.

No details have come down to us as to the household affairs of Shakespeare's father or of himself. Both must be deemed deficient in worldly substance, and Shakespeare determined to seek a career in London.

Visits to Stratford of the Earl of Leicester's Players (and others) in 1573, 1576, and 1577 and of two other companies in 1580 are recorded by Mr. Calmour, who writes, "Perhaps it is in the lives of the Burbages that we are to look for the clue to the early stage career of William Shakespeare.* . . . A family of the name of Burbage was settled at Stratford-upon-Avon in the middle of the 16th century—a John Burbage was Bailiff of the borough in June 1505, and James (the father of Richard and Cuthbert) . . . was as far back as 1559 the head of 'Lord Robert Dudley's company of players,' afterwards the 'Earl of Leicester's players,' chiefly composed of Warwickshire men, who were the Court players and held in the highest esteem. In this company were many educated men from the Universities, men who ranked as gentlemen* . . . ."

Mr. Calmour adds that "John Heminge (afterwards to be William Shakespeare's friend and one of the editors of his collected Plays) was probably of the Company, for he too was a Stratford man."†

* Ib. (pp. 11-12).

† Mr. Calmour (p. 12). Mr. Sidney Lee declares (note, p. 31) that "the common assumption that Richard Burbage with whom Shakespeare was associated was a Stratford man is wholly erroneous. Richard was born in Shoreditch, and his father came from Hertfordshire. John Heminge . . . was beyond reasonable doubt born in Worcestershire."

Mr. Sidney Lee mentions (p. 33) that "in 1587 the two chief companies of actors, claiming respectively the nominal patronage of the Queen and Lord Leicester, returned to London from a provincial tour, during which they visited Stratford. Two subordinate companies, one of which claimed the patronage of the Earl of Essex, and the other that of Lord Stafford, also performed in the town during the same year." Thus the air of Stratford was at this critical period of Shakespeare's life rife with theatrical excitement. What could be more natural than that if Richard Burbage, Shakespeare's lifelong friend, was then with the Earl of Leicester's company, much earnest consultation should take place between Shakespeare and himself?

The next recorded fact in Shakespeare's life gives colour to the supposition, for Shakespeare betook himself to London.

How he prospered there will be shown in the Chapter devoted to the subject; but with regard to his connection with his beloved native place, it is necessary to state some facts, in accordance with the dates of their occurrence.

Mr. Calmour records that in 1586 distress was resorted to to compel Shakespeare's father to pay a debt, and that the Court of Record entry was, "John Shakespeare has no effects on which a distraint can be levied."

Ten years afterwards his position was so much improved (and it may fairly be assumed that Shakespeare had assisted him) that he joined with Shakespeare in applying to the

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It is proper to point out the difference of opinion between Mr. Calmour and Mr. Sidney Lee. It is not important as regards any argument in the text to determine where Burbage and Heminge were born. Mr. Lee himself states (p. 36) enough for the purpose in hand when he says that of the King's Company of players in 1603—"Four of its chief members, Richard Burbage, John Heminge, Henry Condell, and Augustine Phillips, were among Shakespeare's lifelong friends."

College of Heralds for a coat of arms, and in 1599 the Royal sanction was given by Queen Elizabeth.

The domestic affairs of Shakespeare's wife and children at Stratford have (perhaps fortunately) not been much discussed, with regard to the period when Shakespeare's apprenticeship to the stage began.

That he would do all that was possible to assist his family may be assumed.* In 1596, when his worldly position was so much improved as to justify the application for a coat of arms, his only son Hamnet died.

In 1597, though still compelled by his avocations to reside in London, he strengthened his ties to his native place by purchasing New Place, the largest house in Stratford. Subsequently he made other purchases of land there.

A blow fell upon him in 1596. His only son, Hamnet, died and was buried in Stratford Church. Mr. Sidney Lee says that "no doubt" Shakespeare was present at the funeral (11th August) and that henceforward "until the close of his professional career he paid Stratford at least one annual visit."

In 1601 Shakespeare's father died, and Shakespeare, "as the eldest son, inherited the houses in Henley Street, the only portion of the property of the elder Shakespeare or of his wife which had not been alienated to creditors. Shakespeare permitted his mother to reside in one of the Henley Street houses till her death (she was buried 9th

* If there be any truth in the tradition that the Earl of Southampton once presented £1000 to Shakespeare, it is natural to suppose that the gift must be assigned to this period. It was in 1594 that Shakespeare affectionately dedicated the Rape of Lucrece to Southampton, as shown in the next Chapter. After 1595 there could have been no need, on Shakespeare's part, for pecuniary patronage, his position as actor and author being assured, and his purchase of New Place in 1597 proves that funds were then at his command.

September, 1608) and he derived a modest rent from the other."*

It has been accepted by all commentators that Shakespeare produced two plays annually, and acted regularly on the stage throughout his London career. The production of his plays must have been such a strain upon his time that we may well imagine that he may often have been content to act minor parts or those which, like that of the Ghost in Hamlet (ascribed to him by tradition) did not consume much time.

When summoned to act before the Court he would naturally have to act a leading part, and his name always occupied a prominent position in the summons.

But his heart was upon his native place, and after limiting himself for a time to his London domicile, he made Stratford his home in 1611, taking "a full share of social and civic responsibilities." †

His eldest daughter Susanna married, in 1607, John Hall, a physician.

On the 25th January, 1616, he made his Will, the first clause of which emphatically declared his religious convictions.

First.—I commend my soul into the hands of God, my Creator, hoping, and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting; and my body to the earth whereof it is made.

Item.—I give and bequeath unto my daughter Judith . . . &c.

Item.—I give . . . to my said daughter Judith . . .

Item.—I give . . . unto my said sister Joan . . .

Item.—I give and bequeath unto her three sons, William, &c., ...

Item.—I give and bequeath unto the said Elizabeth Hall . . .

Item.—I give . . . unto the poor of Stratford ten pounds, to Mr. Thomas Combe my sword, to Thomas Russell Esq. five pounds . . .

* Life of Shakespeare, p. 204.

† Mr. Sidney Lee, Life of Shakespeare, p. 266.

Item.—I give and bequeath to Hamnet Sadler twenty-six shillings eight pence, to buy him a ring; . . . and to my fellows John Hemynge, Richard Burbage, and Henry Condell . . . to buy them rings.

Item.—I give . . . unto my daughter Susanna Hall for the better enabling her to perform this my Will . . . all that capital messuage or tenement . . . in Stratford aforesaid called the New Place wherein I now dwell, and two messuages . . . within the borough of Stratford, and all my barns, stables . . . within the towns, hamlets, villages, fields, and grounds of Stratford-upon-Avon, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcome . . . and also all that messuage . . . wherein one John Robinson dwelleth . . . in the Blackfriars in London . . . and all other my lands . . . whatsoever . . . (and in default of issue of the daughter Susanna, &c.) to my daughter Judith, &c.

Item.—I give unto my wife my second-best bed* with the furniture.

Item.—I give and bequeath to my daughter Judith my broad silver-gilt bowl. All the rest . . . (after discharge of debts and legacies . . . and my funeral expenses discharged) . . . I give devise and bequeath to my son-in-law John Hall gentleman and my daughter Susanna his wife, whom I ordain and make executors of this my last will and testament. And I do entreat and appoint the said Thomas Russell Esq. and Francis Collins, Gent, to be overseers hereof. . . .

(By me) WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.†

A few brief remarks may be made on this Will. It contains a plain statement of Shakespeare's religious belief. No subtleties of logic can shake his own plain statement, which is in strict conformity with the Sixth Article

* Presumably the best bed at the time of Shakespeare's marriage, long before he became the owner of "New Place."

† It may be noted that the letter *e* is not inserted here after *k*. Nor was it inserted in his name in the inscription under his bust soon afterwards placed in the Church at Stratford. But the spelling of names in the 16th and 17th centuries was various and irregular; and it is convenient to adopt the usage which has now become general. The text is quoted from the "Albion" edition of Shakespeare, London, 1891.

of the Church of England in which he was born, in which he was educated, and under whose banner he died, loyal to his country and to its Church. It is not within the province of any biographer to dispute or throw doubt upon the value of Shakespeare's declaration, so solemnly made, at a time when he was preparing to meet his Creator.

His countrymen at Stratford paid tribute to his memory to the best of their ability.

He was buried within the Chancel of the Holy Trinity Church at Stratford. Some zealous friend caused the following lines to be carved over his grave—

> Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
> To dig the dust enclosed here.
> Blest be the man that spares these stones
> And curst be he that moves my bones.

The local authorities erected within a few years* a monumental bust of Shakespeare on the walls of the Chancel, in the Stratford Church. At the top, supported by two seated ungainly cherubs, was Shakespeare's Coat of Arms. The principal feature of the monument was a painted half-length portrait of Shakespeare, which if not handsome itself was less ungainly than the cherubs. The right hand holds a pen, his left is placed on a piece of paper. On a tablet below his hands are the words— (in the spelling of the day which is not retained here):—

> Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem
> Terra tegit, populus mœret, Olympus habet.

> "Stay, Passenger, why goest thou by so fast?
> Read if thou canst whom envious Death has placed
> Within this monument; Shakspeare with whom
> Quick Nature died, whose name doth deck this tomb
> Far more than cost; since all that he hath writ
> Leaves living art but page to serve his wit."

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* Leonard Digges, in lines published in the Folio Edition of Shakespeare's Plays, 1623, refers to the "Stratford Monument."

Shakespeare's widow survived him; and, dying in 1623, was buried in the chancel near her husband's grave in the Stratford Church. Mrs. Susanna Hall, the elder of Shakespeare's daughters, resided at New Place until she died in 1649. On her tomb in the churchyard at Stratford was the inscription—

> Witty above her sex, but that's not all,
> Wise to Salvation was good Mistress Hall;
> Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
> Wholly of him with whom she's now in bliss.
> Then, passenger, hast ne'er a tear
> To weep with her that wept with all?
> That wept, yet set herself to cheer
> Them up with comforts cordial?
> Her Love shall live, her mercy spread
> When thou hast ne'er a tear to shed.*

Mrs. Hall's only child, her daughter Elizabeth, married Thomas Nash; after whose death in 1647 she married in 1649 Mr. John Barnard, who was knighted in 1661. Inheriting on her mother's death New Place at Stratford and other landed properties, Lady Barnard in her will ordered them to be sold, and they passed away to strangers in 1675.

Shakespeare's younger daughter Judith was married to Thomas Quiney in 1616, had three sons, Shakespeare (born 1616 died 1617), Richard (born 1617 died 1638) and Thomas (born 1619 died 1638); Judith herself surviving until 1661.

With her the direct succession from Shakespeare came to an end. No lineal descendant from him remains forsaken, or begging for bread.

But the products of his imagination remain in the

* Unless no epitaph can be trusted, that upon Mrs. Hall indicates that Shakespeare was wise in leaving possessions to her.

world, not only in his own country but abroad, to charm and instruct the millions who gather inspiration from his words.

For the manner in which those words were handed down to posterity, England, and it may be said the world also, should gratefully remember John Heminge and Henry Condell, to whom as his "fellows" Shakespeare in his Will bequeathed money "to buy them rings."

The dedication of the Volume when published in 1623 in London is recorded in another chapter of this volume. But the importance of the work should be noted here.

Less than half of Shakespeare's plays had been piratically printed during his life. Among those unprinted were The Tempest, Coriolanus, Macbeth, Timon, Measure for Measure, Twelfth Night, As you Like it, Julius Cæsar, Cymbeline, All's Well that Ends Well, Antony and Cleopatra. These and others were included in the Volume published by Shakespeare's loving partners in the Company for which he had done so much as an actor and as an author; and their names should be "freshly remembered" by their countrymen so long as literature holds a place in English story.

That their venture was successful may be inferred from the fact that in nine years a second edition was required and published.

A monument to honour Shakespeare's memory was placed in Westminster Abbey in 1741. A statue of him by Roubillac was presented to the British Museum by the great actor David Garrick in 1779.

Other statues exist in various places; one in the Central Park, New York. There is one in Paris. One of heroic proportions, by Lord Ronald Gower, with ancillary statues of Hamlet, Lady Macbeth, Prince Henry (V.) and Falstaff was presented by the sculptor to the Trustees

of the Shakespeare Memorial Buildings at Stratford, and was unveiled with ceremony in 1888.

The birth-place of Shakespeare in Stratford was secured for the public in 1846, and is visited annually by thousands.

Of the 26,510 who visited it in 1897 it was stated that they "represented over forty nationalities."

Representations of Shakespeare's Plays are periodically given in the Theatre (erected as a portion of the Shakespeare Memorial Buildings at Stratford); and the gifted actress Lady Theodore Martin (Helena Faucit) acted there in 1879, taking the part of Beatrice in Much Ado about Nothing.

The site upon which Shakespeare's residence ("New Place") stood, has been purchased, and now forms a public garden.

Stratford has become a shrine for his memory.

The Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire and other notable persons are Trustees of the Memorial in Stratford, which attracts pilgrims from all parts of the world.

It was fitting that a national shrine should not be without religious observances, and "Shakespeare Sermons"* have become customary in the Stratford Church.

Archbishop Trench had in 1864 preached a Shakespeare Sermon in Stratford on the Tercentary of Shakespeare's birth, taking as his text "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights." . . . .

"Why do we thank God, wherein have we just ground to praise Him, that such a man as Shakespeare has been among us? What is there in his writings to render them an enduring benefit to us, a possession for ever, such as we feel makes us richer, wiser, and using it aright, better than we should have been without it? . . . Of what supreme concern it is that those who so contribute to frame and fashion

* "Shakespeare Sermons, preached at Stratford-on-Avon." 1900. Longmans, Green & Co., London, New York, and Bombay.

a nation's life should be men reconciled with God's scheme of the universe, cheerfully working in their own appointed sphere the work which has been assigned them. . . . Such a poet, I am bold to affirm, we possess in Shakespeare. For must we not, first of all, thankfully acknowledge a healthiness, a moral soundness in all, or nearly all, which he has written? that on his part there is no paltering with the everlasting ordinances on which the moral estate of man's life reposes, no challenging of the fitness of these, no summoning of God to answer for himself at the bar of man for the world which He has created? Then, too, if he deals with enormous crimes (and he could not do otherwise, for these, alike in fiction and reality, constitute the tragedy of life), yet the crimes which he deals with travel the common road of human guilt, with no attempt upon his part to extend and enlarge the domain of possible sin, and certainly with no desire to paint it with any other colours than its own. He dallies not with forbidden things. All which the Latin language, with so just a moral instinct, styled *infanda* and *nefanda*, things as little to be spoken of as done, these, which thus declare themselves unutterable, remain with rarest exception unuttered by him. And in his dialogue, if we set him beside others of his age and time, how little, by comparison with them, is there which we wish away from him, would fain that he had never written. There are some of his contemporaries whose jewels, when they offer any such, must be plucked out of the very mire, who seem to revel in disgusting images, all which, for poor human nature's sake, we would willingly put out of sight altogether. What an immeasurable gulf in this matter divides him from them! . . . But Shakespeare, if he has wrought any passing wrong, or given any just occasion of offence in the matters of which we speak, let us not forget the compensations which he has made; that we owe to him those ideals of perfect womanhood which are the loveliest, perhaps the most transcendent, creations of his art. Shakespeare's women, we have but to mention them, and what a procession of female figures, whose very names make music in our ears, move at once before the eyes of our mind. Surely, if the woman be in God's intention the appointed guardian of the sanctities of home, the purities of domestic life, we owe him much who has peopled the world of our imagination with shapes 'so perfect and so peerless' as these. . . . I will only ask you each to imagine to himself this England of ours without her Shakespeare; an England in which he had never lived nor sung. What a crown would be stricken from her brow! How would she come down from the pre-eminence of her place as nursing mother of the foremost poet whom the world has seen, whom, we are almost bold to prophesy, it ever will see! Think how much poorer intellectually, yea, and morally, every one of us would be; what would

have to be withdrawn from circulation, of wisest sayings, of profoundest maxims of life-wisdom, which have now been absorbed into the very tissue of our hearts and minds! What regions of our fancy, peopled now with marvellous shapes of strength, of grace, of beauty, of dignity, with beings which have far more reality for us than most of those whom we meet in our daily walk, would be empty and depopulated! And remember that this which we speak of would not be our loss alone, nor the loss of those who have lived already, but the disappearance as well of all that delight, of all that instruction, which so long as the world endures, he will diffuse in circles ever larger, as the recognition of him in his unapproachable greatness becomes every day more unquestioned, as he moves in the ages which are yet to come 'through ever wider avenues of fame.' . . . Brethren beloved, I should be untrue to that solemn trust which I bear, untrue to those responsibilities from which I can never divest myself, if I did not remind you—above all if I did not remind you on such a day as this—that goodness is more than greatness, and grace than gifts; that men attain to heaven not soaring on the wings of genius, but patiently climbing by steep stairs of faith and love and obedience; that the brightest crowns, if all their brightness is of earth and none from heaven, are doomed to wither; that there is but one amaranthine crown, even that which Christ gives to them, be they high or low, wise or simple, emperors or clowns, who have loved and served and obeyed Him. . . . For myself, I am strong to believe that from one so tender, so just, so true, as was Shakespeare, the grace to make this highest consecration was not withholden; that we have a right to number him with Dante, with Spenser, with Milton, and with all that august company of poets

> 'Who sing, and singing, in their glory move!'

His intimate, in some sense his profound, acquaintance with Scripture, no one can deny, or the strong grasp he had of its central truths. . . . He has set forth the scheme of our redemption in words as lovely and as exquisite as have ever flowed from the lips of uninspired man:—

> 'Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once,
> And He that might the vantage best have took
> Found out the remedy.'
>
> . . . . . .

Who shall persuade us that he abode outside of that holy temple of our faith whereof he has uttered such glorious things, admiring its beauty, but not himself entering to worship there? One so real, so truthful, as all which we learn about Shakespeare declares him to have been, assuredly fell in with no idle form of words, when in that last testa-

ment* which he dictated so shortly before his death, he first of all, and before all, commended his soul to God his Creator; and this (I quote his express words), 'hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour to be made partaker of life everlasting.' May God grant this to us all."

In April 1894 the Rev. R. S. de C. Laffan said in his sermon—

"I do not hesitate to claim for Shakespeare that he is supremely the prophet, the forthteller of human nature and of human life." . . . "If, then, you would have the prophet's reward—the reward of insight into human nature and human life—that insight which it, above all, imports you to have, because human nature, your nature and mine, is the instrument and human life is the material with which and out of which you and I are to help to fashion the Kingdom of God on earth—if you would know yourself and the world—receive the poet in the name of—that is, as being in very deed and truth—a prophet; and through the joy and the laughter and the mirth of this week of delight in his fair and free creations, keep your eyes open to those deeper notes which will furnish food for days of after meditation."

In April 1896, Canon Ainger, Master of the Temple, was the preacher.

"The two great facts (he said) about Shakespeare that are admissible for our consideration on such an occasion are his marvellous and unique position as a thinker and a teacher concerning human life; and the extent to which his teachings are continuously alive in the world, just because they are not given in the forms of maxims and apophthegms, scattered desultorily over his pages, but are bound up with portraitures of flesh and blood which the deep humanity of the poet has invested with perpetual life. It is thus that Shakespeare has impressed himself upon the memories and hearts of Englishmen in a way and degree to which, of course, there is no parallel in any other writer." . . . "It is no shock to us to discover from Shakespeare's pages that some of the most spiritual morality of God's Word was familiar to him, and was incarnated by him in the noblest and purest of his characters. We are thankful for this, since the result has been to leaven our life and imagination with high and great thoughts clothed in the language of consummate poetry. It is sometimes said of a dramatic poet that we can never know his real sentiments, just because he is dramatic, and

* This subject is dealt with in another chapter of this work—"Shakespeare's Religion and his Teaching."

places them in the mouths of the characters to whom they are appropriate. This seems to me a shallow criticism which falls to pieces when we allow ourselves to study the poet's treatment of human life as a whole. When we pass in review his leading creations can we have a moment's doubt as to Shakespeare's own ideals, and the ideals he wishes us to sympathize with? Can we recall the marvellous series of his heroines—a Portia, an Imogen, a Cordelia, a Miranda, a Beatrice, and have a moment's doubt as to what Shakespeare revered as the ideal character of woman? Not here alone, but in his whole treatment of life and conduct, we are never left in doubt as to what side Shakespeare is on; he never juggles with the moral law, or sophisticates his reader's conscience. He never conceals his conviction that what men sow, that must they reap; and this, not merely in his tragedies, but in his lighter vein of comedy—that frivolity in a Mercutio, unreality in a Jacques, genial sensuality in a Falstaff, must have their Nemesis."

"I am not citing (these oft told truths) because we are assembled in a Church. Outside of God's house—wherever men do congregate, or wherever they muse in solitude—there abides this great cause of thankfulness to Almighty God that the greatest name in our literature should be also our wisest and profoundest teacher." . . .

"Of these whose creations are thus endued with perpetual life, independent of change and fashion, greatest among Englishmen is your great townsman. This is yet another truism, yet who can ignore it on a day like this? He is greatest, because he is our great *teacher*. We are the better and the wiser because he was faithful to the great truths which God commissioned him to speak. It is idle—and worse than idle—for it is to be faithless to the Giver of every good and perfect gift—to deny the Divine ministry of great poets, merely because it takes forms with which we personally have no sympathy, or of which, in our narrowness and ignorance, we may disapprove. Be not deceived. 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous'; and he who speaketh words of righteousness learned them from God. He, the net result of whose life's task is to strengthen in us reverence for goodness, and for whatever things pertain to God's kingdom, has done, with whatever alloy of human sin and imperfection, God's work in the world. And inasmuch as he has done so, in union with imaginative* gifts

* The great Professor Tyndall, eminent in the reign of Queen Victoria on account of his scientific attainments and works, once said to the author:—"I think the imagination of Shakespeare is the most wonderful thing in the world." "Well, he tells you where he got it from." "No! where?" "He makes Theseus say—

unique in the world's history—gifts which have diffused his teaching through our daily thoughts and memories, and woven his words into the very fabric of our daily speech, it is wise and good that we should meet here to thank God for this mighty blessing, and to remember our responsibilities for it."

In 1899 the Very Rev. C. W. Stubbs, Dean of Ely, preached the Stratford sermon. He said:—

"In this memorial service then 'let us render again unto God for him thanksgiving for all the joy,' thanksgiving for all the mighty achievement of his poetic genius, of his prophetic vision as a supreme interpreter of human life—'how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in apprehension how like a God!'—thanksgiving for all the joy which has come down to us through the centuries as his gift to the English race, to the human race for ever. . . . But you will ask me very probably, and some of you perhaps with some surprise—Can you really speak of Shakespeare, even in this sense, as a prophet? Can you speak of him, in any sense, even as a religious man? My friends, I should not care to speak of him in this place at all if I did not think that he was both."

In 1900 the Very Rev. Dean of Canterbury, F. W. Farrar, was the preacher at Stratford.

"This Sunday (he said) is set apart in Stratford-on-Avon to commemorate the greatest of English poets, and to thank God for so rich a boon to us and to the human race. . . . If his dramatic genius and that which was the *vitium temporis* more than the *vitium hominis*, prevented him from totally excluding from his Plays the element of coarseness, yet his moral judgment was never misled. He has to represent low characters, and to echo coarse talk, but never, under any circumstances does he sink so low as to

'Paint the gates of Hell with Paradise;'

'The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination.'

"You see he starts from heaven—'*from heaven to earth.*'"

"Ah! you rogue!" quoth the Professor, with a good-humoured smile.

or to imitate the flagrant immoralities of contemporary dramatists who—

'stood around
The throne of Shakespeare, sturdy but unclean.'

"He feels evident intellectual delight in setting before us a living picture of the debauched, witty, and utterly worthless Falstaff; yet the deliberate verdict of his common sense as to such a character is uttered in the thundercrash of reproof with which the depraved sensualist is dismissed." . . .

"Without sinking for a moment into religious artificiality, or losing sight of the sacredness of facts, Shakespeare becomes a moral teacher for all time.

"From the whole range of English literature you could gather no nobler or truer exhortations to chastity than you will find in Shakespeare; no deeper warnings against greed, envy, and worldly ambition; no more powerful sermon to the whole English people against the degradation and ruin of drunkenness. The greatest and holiest of souls have seen this." (After quoting Milton and Wordsworth) Canon Farrar cited Keble's statement that Shakespeare "'favoured virtue from his very soul, and led the way to sounder views even upon sacred things.' 'His plays (said Dean Milman) are instinct with the religious life of Christianity.' 'His mind was saturated with the Bible,' said Bishop Charles Wordsworth. I will now dwell as briefly as I possibly can on two only of the immense benefits which we may gain from the study of his works. One of these is the thrilling finality with which he expresses many a holy and powerful lesson in isolated passages; the other is the deeper and more solemn insight into the meaning of life which he concentrates into many plays. . . .

"But it is in five of his later plays that with no miserable conventions, no namby-pamby make-believes, he portrays our nature alike in its greatness and in its littleness. In those plays especially, the reader, as Goethe says, 'seems to have before him the Book of Fate, against which is beating the tempest of eager life, so as to drive the leaves backwards and forwards with violence.' . . .

"Shakespeare has no little platitudes to offer us; nor will he weaken the intense force of the lesson that even if life were but—

"A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,' right still differs from wrong, not by mere preferability, but by heaven-high and immeasurable distance; faith and goodness still burn through the midnight, and triumph over it; and when the true and the noble seem to be most hopelessly overwhelmed under the wild hurricanes of calamity, he makes us feel that 'upon such sacrifices the gods themselves throw incense.' Even were there nothing beyond, we would still

rather be Cordelia strangled in prison than enjoy the 'raving egoism' of Goneril and Regan arrayed in their 'adulterous purple'; just as we would rather lie dead like sweet, murdered Desdemona, or self-stabbed with rash, but honest Othello, than triumph with the thrice execrable Iago; and rather lie murdered at midnight like gracious Duncan, his white hair dabbled with his gore, than be his haggard and haunted murderer. But how infinitely more is this the case when, however we may be stretched 'on the rack of this tough world,' we know assuredly that 'the eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.'" . . .

Such are the honours paid to Shakespeare after the lapse of centuries in his native land, and if anything human can endure, his countrymen may say with confidence—

Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt.

It is convenient to present in this place some of the comments upon Shakespeare which have been made at various times by men eminent in English literature.

Milton's noble lines appear on the title page of this work. In L'Allegro Milton speaks of

Sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's* child
(Warbling) his native wood notes wild.

Dryden lauded him in a comprehensive couplet (1676)—

But Shakespeare's magic could not copied be,
Within that circle none durst walk but he.

And in 1696, with a bust of Shakespeare before him, he wrote—

With awe I ask his blessing ere I write,
With reverence look on his majestic face,
Proud to be less, but of his Godlike race.

In 1694 Charles Gildon, addressing Dryden, recalled a circumstance which he had originally heard of from Dryden, *i.e.*, that before the year 1640

"the ever-memorable Mr. Hales, of Eton, affirmed that he would show all the poets of antiquity outdone by Shakespeare. . . . The

* In Milton's time it must be remembered that "fancy" often meant "imagination."

enemies of Shakespeare would by no means yield him so much excellence; so that it came to a resolution of a trial of skill upon that subject; the place agreed upon for the dispute was Mr. Hales' chamber at Eton; a great many books were sent down by the enemies of the poet, and on the appointed day my Lord Falkland, Sir John Suckling, and all the persons of quality that had Wit and Learning, and interested themselves in the quarrel, met there, and upon a thorough disquisition of the point, the Judges chosen by agreement out of this learned and ingenious assembly unanimously gave the preference to Shakespeare. And the Greek and Roman poets were adjudged to vail at least their glory in that of the English poet."

Perhaps it is desirable at this place to mention Jeremy Collier, "the hammer" of the English stage in the 17th century, who in denouncing Dryden and other dramatists, was constrained to exempt Shakespeare from some of his denunciations.* As to the "cursing and swearing" produced on the stage he declared that

"Shakespeare is comparatively sober." . . . "Shakespeare takes the freedom to represent the clergy in several of his plays; but for the most part he holds up the function and makes them neither act nor suffer anything unhandsome." "Shakespeare's Falstaff . . . is represented lewd but not little, and the disgrace falls rather on the person than the office." . . . "And here we may observe the admired Falstaff goes off in disappointment. He is thrown out of favour as being a rake, and dies like a rat behind the hangings. The pleasures he had given would not excuse him. The poet was not so partial as to let his humour compound for his lewdness."

On the question of "Immodesty of the Stage" he says:

"As for Shakespeare he is too guilty to make an evidence; but I think he gains not much by his misbehaviour; he has commonly Plautus' fate, where there is most Smut there is least sense."

It was not the wish of Collier to find virtue or modesty on the English Stage, but if he felt that he was called upon to allude to Shakespeare at all on the score of modesty, he might have been so just as to mention the

* View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage, by Jeremy Collier, M.A. London, 1698.

characters of Miranda, Perdita, Imogen, Cordelia, Isabel, Rosalind, Portia, and others of Shakespeare's creation.

The poet Gray, himself to live so long as the English language lives, wrote in the 18th century :—

> In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid
> What time where lucid Avon strayed,
> To him the mighty Mother did unveil
> Her awful face; the dauntless child
> Stretched forth his little arms and smiled;
> This pencil take, she said, whose colours clear
> Richly paint the vernal year,
> Thine, too, these golden keys, immortal Boy!
> This can unlock the gates of Joy,
> Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears
> Or ope the sacred fount of sympathetic Tears.

In the same century the great Samuel Johnson thus sung Shakespeare's praise :—

> When Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes
> First reared the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose.
> Each change of many-coloured life he drew,
> Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new;
> Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
> And panting Time toiled after him in vain.
> His powerful strokes presiding Truth impressed,
> And unresisted Passion stormed the breast.

Wordsworth's tribute to Shakespeare's genius is recorded elsewhere in this Chapter, and perhaps it may be thought tedious to enumerate more of his English admirers here.

Nor is it necessary to fill so many pages as would be required if an effort were made to describe what has been said or done in honour of Shakespeare by our kinsmen in America, though it is perhaps proper to say something.

Archbishop Trench once wrote that when one reads the words of ordinary writers one may assume that one comprehends all that was in the author's mind, but that to do so with regard to Shakespeare would be presumptuous.

Emerson, in similar strain, told his countrymen:—

"A good reader can in a sort nestle into Plato's brain and think from thence; but not into Shakespeare's. We are still out of doors."

James Russell Lowell* wrote:—

"Consider for a moment if ever the Imagination has been so embodied as in Prospero, the Fancy as in Ariel, the brute Understanding as in Caliban. . . . The whole play, indeed, is a succession of illusions, winding up with those solemn words of the great enchanter, who had summoned to his service every shape of merriment or passion, every figure in the great tragi-comedy of life, and who was now bidding farewell to the scene of his triumphs. For in Prospero shall we not recognise the artist himself?"

How true was Lowell's insight! For was not Shakespeare, in the realm of Imagination, what Prospero was in the region of ministering Spirits?

The reputation of Shakespeare on the continent of Europe had its rise among the Germans, a kindred people, between whom and the English no "tumultuous wars" should "kin with kin and kind with kind confound."

After minor efforts by others, the great Lessing, himself a tragedian, startled his countrymen by declaring that Shakespeare not only excelled the dramatists of the Continent, but all other poets, ancient or modern.

At a later date Schlegel, Professor of Literature at Jena, translated many of Shakespeare's Plays, and the verdicts of Lessing and Schlegel may be said to have been practically unchallenged.

These facts were doubtless discussed often in English society; and the poet Wordsworth wrote (in 1815):—

"The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching to a knowledge of what Shakespeare is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the poet; for among us it is a common opinion that Shakespeare is 'justly praised when he is pronounced to be a wild irregular genius in whom great faults are compensated by

* Whom, as well as E. J. Phelps, the author has had the good fortune to number among his friends.

great beauties.' How long may it be before this misconception passes away and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakespeare is not less admirable than his imagination ?"

Goethe also was eloquent in praise of Shakespeare.

Nor have the German people shown lack of appreciation. A friend of the author (who visited Berlin about twenty years ago) returned to London somewhat downcast, because he had seen in Berlin no less than three Theatres simultaneously producing Shakespeare's plays; a sign of admiration which was lacking in London.

In France the adverse criticism of Voltaire might have been expected. Between the devoutness and imagination of Shakespeare and the flimsy causticities of Voltaire on serious subjects, there could be no sympathy, and Voltaire railed at Shakespeare as a barbarian, a "grand fou, mais il a des morceaux admirables."

La Harpe, another French critic in the close of the 18th century, expressed contempt also. He admitted that Shakespeare had some merits, but when it was proposed to honour him in Paris, to erect the hut of the savage on the banks of the Seine, it was necessary to speak plainly.

So contemptuous could a Frenchman become who was able to convert Shakespeare's noun "rush" (used as a type of weakness) into a verb symbolizing power; and Shakespeare's verb "man" into a noun, which he thought much better.*

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* La Harpe did not write accurately about Shakespeare's English. The French translators had rendered Othello's words—

"Man but a rush against Othello's breast and he retires"—

thus—

"Qu'un bras seulement menace le sein d'Otello et il va fuir."

On this translation, La Harpe exclaims—"Qu'un bras seulement menace le sein d'Otello. Pourquoi cette tournure bizarre, un bras? Il y a dans l'Anglais 'man,' un homme, qui vaut beaucoup mieux; qu'un homme lève le bras contre Othello, et Othello va fuir. Voilà la phrase de l'auteur Anglais."

But La Harpe could be serious. There were, he said,

"quelques beautés naturelles dans les productions informes et monstrueuses faites pour un peuple encore grossier," but it was absurd to make any comparison between Shakespeare and "notre Corneille et notre Racine."*

The French editors had lauded The Tempest. La Harpe declared that

"aux yeux de quiconque a du bon sens" it was "le fruit du délire d'un malade, ou de l'ivresse d'un sauvage." They had called La Harpe "l'ennemi des grands hommes," because he preferred . . . "Racine à Shakespeare, . . . tant l'esprit de parti ôte non seulement toute raison, mais encore toute pudeur."

Since the days of Voltaire and La Harpe, however, it may be said that wider knowledge of Shakespeare's works has exalted his reputation in France. Eminent men have translated them. Hamlet and other masterpieces have been frequently produced on the Parisian stage.†

La Harpe concludes his diatribe (144 pages) by saying—"Quand les Français qui ont quelque teinture des lettres nous (Shakespeare) presenteront pour modèle, je ne croirai jamais qu'ils sont de bonne foi. . . J'en éprouve un bien doux en finissant, c'est que j'ai defendu la gloire de mon pays en defendant la verité contre ces calomniateurs des Arts qui voudrait amener Bedlam et Tyburn sur la scène Française, et éléver des huttes des sauvages autour de la colonnade du Louvre."

* The translators of Shakespeare, whose work had provoked La Harpe's wrath, were M. Mercier and M. le Chevalier Rutlidge, to whom Shakespeare's "poésie—'semble une veritable inspiration.' Les caractères sont le produit d'humanité, telles qu'elle se présente dans tous les lieux. L'art dramatique reçut de son génie toute l'énergie, tout le charme, tout l'intérêt dont il est susceptible." In 1776 two volumes of Latourneur's translation of Shakespeare appeared.

† A passing remark may be made as to the manner in which "chances mock and changes fill the cup of alteration." Shakespeare never saw his wondrous female characters acted hy women. In his time they were acted by men or boys. Killigrew (temp. Charles II.) has the credit of inaugurating a change, and Betterton, himself a great presenter of Shakespeare's heroes, made the practice universal. His own wife acted as Ophelia, Juliet, and Lady Macbeth in the close of the seventeenth century. Who can estimate the loss which would have been sustained by England if no women such as Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, Lady Martin, Miss Ellen

So eminent a name in French literature as that of Voltaire cannot be lightly passed over in the list of French critics of Shakespeare. But to present a picture of Voltaire in his various attitudes of criticism and spleen would swell this volume to unreasonable dimensions, and readers who desire to probe the question fully, have the means to do so by studying Dr. Lounsbury's "Shakespeare and Voltaire."*

The praise of Shakespeare in France provoked Voltaire to write a protesting letter to Lord Lyttelton in 1750. He described Hamlet as

"a coarse and barbarous piece, which would not be tolerated by the lowest rabble of France and Italy. . . . They sing at the table, they quarrel, they beat one another, they kill one another. One would suppose this work to be the fruit of the imagination of a drunken savage." . . .

"Aid me (Voltaire wrote to the Comte d'Argental in 1761) to avenge my country for this Anglican insolence" (preference of Shakespeare to Corneille).

He made more than one public "Appeal to the Nations."

A French Journal (Encyclopédique) in 1760 had lauded the Ghost Scene in Hamlet as undoubtedly "the masterpiece of the stage" in its domain, and had said that

"one will vainly search in Corneille's writings for that inexhaustible fund of an imagination equally pathetic and sublime, fantastic and picturesque, sombre and gay, and that prodigious variety of characters, all so well marked, all so well contrasted, that there is not a single one of their speeches which can be transferred from the one to the other; talents which are peculiar to Shakespeare, and in which he surpasses all other

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Terry, and others had not presented Shakespeare's women to the life on the English stage? In France at the present day, Madame Sarah Bernhardt, after bewitching the world for years in female characters, has commanded admiration by presenting herself as Hamlet!

* Shakespeare and Voltaire. By Thomas R. Lounsbury, L.H D., LL.D. London: David Nutt, Long Acre, 1902.

poets. He is, so to speak, the mirror of nature, in which all the traits of the human soul are reflected as perfectly as the features of the countenance are displayed in the glass of ordinary mirrors."

Voltaire persevered in his criticisms, and in 1769 Mrs. Montagu retorted with "An Essay on the writings and genius of Shakespeare, compared with the Greek and French dramatic poets, with some remarks upon the misrepresentations of Mr. de Voltaire." She might influence the unprejudiced, but Voltaire's course was not to be changed.

"I have believed (he wrote), I believe, and I shall believe, that Paris is much superior to Athens in the matter of tragedies and comedies. Molière and even Regnard appear to me to surpass Aristophanes. . . . I will say to you boldly that all the Greek tragedies seem to me to be the work of schoolboys in comparison with the sublime scenes of Corneille and the perfect tragedies of Racine."

In 1768, writing to the Duchesse de Choiseul, Voltaire complained that Walpole "gives to his vulgar buffoon Shakespeare preference over Racine and Corneille, and that is something for which I care a great deal." A few years afterwards he wrote to D'Alembert that he had "always wondered" that a nation which has "produced geniuses full of taste and even of delicacy, as well as philosophers worthy of you yourself, should be willing to pride themselves upon this abominable Shakespeare, who is in truth only a village buffoon, and has not written two decent lines."

Extracts from Voltaire's criticism may here come to an end. If his words were worthy of respect Englishmen might despair as to the fame of their countryman; but their animosity betrays a carking consciousness that howsoever the writer might burnish his own brass he could never make it vie, in the estimation of the wise, with the Royal Treasure of Shakespeare.

In Italy the study of Shakespeare has been cultivated, and those who have been so fortunate as to see Madame Ristori as Lady Macbeth and Salvini as Othello must acknowledge that the reward of the study has been rich.

In Holland, Poland, Hungary, and Russia, all or nearly all of Shakespeare's works have been rendered in the vernacular. Wherever there is literature he is present, and it is not too much to say that the praise of him is universal.

CHAPTER II.

Shakespeare in London.

When Shakespeare, as previously recorded, betook himself to London at a date not recorded, but assumed by some writers to have been in 1586, or 1587, he may be credited with ambition to exercise his talents upon the stage, for in a few short years he had become, according to a literary contemporary, "excellent in the qualities he professes." How intimate his acquaintance with the Burbages was, when he arrived in London, is not known; though it is surmised that during the period in which Shakespeare's father was a patron of the drama, Richard Burbage and Shakespeare must have become acquainted with one another, and thus laid the foundation of their lifelong friendship, at a time when James Burbage (the father of Richard) was the leader of the Earl of Leicester's theatrical company, which Shakespeare's father, in his palmy days, entertained at Stratford.

The idle guesses as to the manner in which a friendless lad might be compelled to seek employment in London by holding horses, &c., may be discarded as absurd in the case of Shakespeare, for Richard Field, a Stratford friend, was established there; and was, as Mr. Sidney Lee informs us, after having left Stratford in 1579 to become a printer, "made free of the Stationers' Company in 1587."*

Acting on the boards of the theatre was the first occu-

* Field published for Shakespeare his Venus and Adonis in 1593, and his Tarquin and Lucrece in the following year.

pation to which, if permitted to do so, Shakespeare could devote himself. James Burbage was the controller of the theatre called "The Theatre,"* and his son Richard (Shakespeare's lifelong friend) would assist the neophyte in acquiring his art. Ere long he was assigned a high place among "the principal actors." Mr. Sidney Lee records the fact that in 1592 the publisher Chettle declared that Shakespeare was "excellent in the qualities he professes," and some credit is due to a statement thus openly made.

But Shakespeare must have had early longings to produce plays and not merely to act upon the stage.

His youthful poems (Venus, and Lucrece) then in manuscript would justify hopes on the part of the Company, whose active help was necessary, and this was obtained in 1591, three or four years after Shakespeare had left Stratford to seek his fortune in London.

To Love's Labours Lost may reasonably be assigned (Mr. Sidney Lee† thinks) priority in point of time of all Shakespeare's dramatic productions.

There are differences of opinion as to the order in which the plays were produced; but having touched the subject, it is convenient to present a list‡ to the reader with a proviso that there are doubts as to the accuracy of the chronology of any known list.

The Tempest, however, may safely be stated to be the last; though of course there are some dissidents; there

* Sidney Lee. Life of Shakespeare, p. 33.

† Life of Shakespeare, p. 50.

‡ For list of Shakespeare's Plays, *vide* Appendix. It is contended by some persons that Henry VIII. was of later date than The Tempest; but as Henry VIII. was publicly announced as the joint work of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and was so produced, it cannot be claimed as wholly Shakespeare's work. Mr. Sidney Lee descibes it as an "historical masque." "The procession" in the fourth act must have been a prominent feature of it.

being always commentators like Iago, who are "nothing if not critical."

The production of a new play by the young actor of Burbage's Company must have been an anxious task. Many of Shakespeare's Sonnets were then in circulation among his friends in manuscript, and he introduced several of them in the text of Love's Labour's Lost.

That the play achieved success may be inferred from the fact that it retained its position on the stage, and was piratically printed.*

As his Sonnets were (as was customary at the time) freely circulated in manuscript, they were widely known. How popular his poems became is proved by the demand for them. Mr. Sidney Lee states† that it was by means of them

"that he first impressed a wide circle of his contemporaries with the fact of his mighty genius. . . . John Weever, in his Epigrams, eulogized the two poems as an unmatchable achievement. . . . Printers and publishers of the poems strained their resources to satisfy the demands of eager purchasers. No fewer than seven editions of 'Venus' appeared between 1594 and 1602, an eighth followed in 1617. 'Lucrece' achieved a fifth edition in 1616."

His summons to act at Court‡ with the most famous actors of the day at Christmas 1594 was possibly due in part to personal interest in himself. Elizabeth quickly showed him special favour. Until the end of her reign, his plays were repeatedly acted in her presence.§

* Shakespeare published nothing himself, except the two poems dedicated to Southampton. But there was at the time no law which protected authors from piracy, and many of his plays and his Sonnets were printed and sold openly during his lifetime.

† Life of Shakespeare, pp. 78, 79.

‡ ib., p. 81.

§ Nicholas Rowe, the dramatist, edited Shakespeare's plays in 1709. Mr. Sidney Lee records (p. 171) that "Rowe asserts that Queen Elizabeth was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff

Shakespeare's name was always prominent in the printed lists of the "principal actors" who were commanded to act before the Court.

Having glanced thus at his appearances in public, it is convenient to allude briefly to his social position, and the estimation in which he was held in the years of his early residence in London, where it is generally assumed that he arrived in 1586 or in 1587.*

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in the two parts of Henry IV., "that she commanded him to continue it in one play more, and to show him in love." Dennis, in the dedication of "The Comical Gallant, 1702, noted that the 'Merry Wives' was written at the Queen's command and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it acted that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days, and was afterwards, as tradition tells us, very well pleased with the representation." If the tradition be true, it furnishes proof of Shakespeare's sound judgment, as well as of his skill and celerity. But though in appearance he complied with the Queen's desire, in substance he retained the gluttonous selfishness of the Falstaff of Henry IV., which was incompatible with love of anyone but himself. Not even Royal command could warp Shakespeare to falsify the creatures of his imagination. Of the true love which is unselfish, Falstaff was incapable, but Shakespeare was able to gratify the Queen by a presentation of a Falstaff who was always in love with himself, though for selfish purposes he could pretend to make love to two women at the same time, with the hope of obtaining some of their husbands' monies, and was made a fool of by the Merry Wives, apparently to the Queen's delectation.

* It is not desirable to refer in the text to the gossip which has been printed about what has been called the "poaching episode" in Shakespeare's life. No contemporary record of it has been produced. Mr. Sidney Lee adverts, p. 27, to "the independent testimony of one Archdeacon Davies late in the seventeenth century," but adds that the tradition has been challenged (p. 28). Such belated gossip cannot be classed as testimony, and as Shakespeare was not without detractors, he was liable like others to be the subject of loose imputations. A sidelight as to the current opinion of the day with regard to poaching is thrown by Mr. Calmont (in Fact and Fiction about Shakespeare, p. 25) when he states that "the same form of depredation was practised by the students of the Universities, and Dr. Forman relates how two students in 1573—one of them John Thornborough aged 21, after-

That he was attached to James Burbage's company as an actor is acknowledged by all. Mr. Sidney Lee affirms that he became a partner in the company in 1594; and he had therefore a share in its control, with his life-long friends Richard Burbage, John Heminge, Henry Condell, and Augustine Phillips.

In the theatrical world his position was assured. We may glean some information as to his social position by means of his known relations to the Earl of Southampton (to whom some of his Sonnets were addressed), the Earl of Pembroke and his brother, the Earl of Montgomery, to whom Heminge and Condell (Shakespeare's "life-long friends") dedicated the first edition of Shakespeare's Plays in 1623.

A private letter from the Earl of Essex, 11th Oct., 1599,* informs us that "my Lord Southampton and Lord Rutland . . . pass away the time in London merely in going to plays every day."

John Weever, in his Epigrammes (1595), addressed Shakespeare as:—

"Honey-tongued Shakespeare, when I saw thine issue
I swore Apollo got them, and none other:
Their rosy-tinted features clothed in tissue,
Some heaven-born Goddess said to be their mother . . ."

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wards Bishop of Worcester—never studied nor gave themselves to their books, but to go to schools of defence, to the dancing schools, to steal deer and conies," &c.

He adds that in "Wits' Bedlam," 1617, it was published that

"Some colts, wild youngsters, that ne'er broken were,
Think it a doughty deed to steel a deer."

Though there is no proof that Shakespeare ever performed such a deed, so much has been written about the rumours of it that it seems desirable to allude to them. *Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa.*

* Quoted in the National Review, February, 1903, in an admirable article by Michael Drummond, K.C.

Richard Barnfield, in "A Remembrance of Some English Poets," published in 1598, wrote—

"And Shakespeare, thou whose honey-flowing Vaine,
Pleasing the world thy praises doth obtain,
Whose Venus, and whose Lucrece (sweet and chaste)
Thy name in Fame's immortal book have placed,
Live ever thou, at least in fame live ever,
Well may thy body die, but Fame dies never."

And we are informed that Gabriel Harvey wrote that "the younger sort take much delight in Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, but his Lucrece and his tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, have it in them to please the wiser sort."

Francis Meres, a Cambridge graduate, in his "Wits' Treasury," published in 1598, wrote:—"As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare; witness his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugared 'Sonnets,'* among his private friends, &c. . . . The Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine-filed phrases if they could speak English."

* Much has been written about Shakespeare's Sonnets and the cryptic allusions which they are supposed to contain with regard to his private life. Some of them, of course, such as those which are apparently addressed to his patron, the Earl of Southampton, may reveal his innermost feelings, but most of them are mere leaflets, thrown off carelessly, and when copied by the curious, collected for publication without authority from the poet. How fanciful some of them are four lines in the 62nd Sonnet may suffice to show:—

"But when my glass shows me myself indeed
Beated and chopped with tanned antiquity,
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read,
Self so self-loving were iniquity."

Petrarch's example had set a fashion, and thousands of Sonnets were issued in the 16th century in England and France, in which latter country Ronsard was responsible (according to Mr. Sidney Lee, p. 444) for "more than nine hundred sonnets," published in 1594.

The private letter of the Earl of Essex, in 1599, already quoted, has shown that at that time the Earl of Southampton was an assiduous frequenter of the theatre; and two unimpeachable documents signed by Shakespeare himself demonstrate that in 1593 and 1594 Southampton was specially honoured by Shakespeare as a patron.

Shakespeare dedicated to him, in 1593, his Venus and Adonis, thus:—

"To the Rt. Honble. Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield.—Right Honourable, I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden; only if your Honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest.

"I leave it to your Honourable survey, and your Honour to your heart's content, which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.

"Your Honour's in all duty,
"WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE."

In 1594 he dedicated his Rape of Lucrece to Southampton thus:—

"The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done

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The unauthorized publication of manuscripts sent privately to friends and copied by the curious, produced a heterogeneous collection when Thomas Thorpe piratically printed Shakespeare's Sonnets in 1609, and this fact should be borne in mind by those who read them. Mr. Sidney Lee remarks (p. 87) that in "literary value they are notably unequal" (which was inevitable under the circumstances). He adds, however, that "Many reach levels of lyric melody and meditative energy that are hardly to be matched elsewhere in poetry."

is yours, what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours.

"Were my worth greater my duty would show greater: meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness,

"Your Lordship's in all duty,

"WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE."

No one who reads these Dedications* and the pages preceding them can doubt that among the cultivated and literary classes Shakespeare had rapidly acquired in society an eminent position, not only as an actor but as a dramatist.

But there are always some who are not "glad of other men's good" or content with their own inferiority, and there is contemporary proof that Shakespeare was not without detractors, though their efforts to depreciate or crush him were unsuccessful.

One Robert Greene, himself a dramatist and pamphleteer, but a man of dissipated character, reveals to us the fact that Shakespeare's success excited envy among some of his contemporaries. Repentant with regard to his own dissipated habits and neglect of religious duty, Greene addressed to his former associates, Marlowe and others, "A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance," which Henry Chettle, dramatist and publisher, printed after Greene's death in September 1592.

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* When dedicating the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare's Plays in 1623 to the Earl of Pembroke and the Earl of Montgomery, the Editors were able to remind them that they had been "pleased to think these trifles something heretofore, and have prosecuted them and their author living with so much favour (that the Editors hoped they would) use the like indulgence toward them you have done unto their parent. . . . For so much were your Lordships' likings of the several parts when they were acted, as before they were published the Volume asked to be yours."

In it he implores Marlowe, "famous gracer of tragedians," not to wonder that Greene—

"who hath said with thee, like the fool in his heart, that there is no God, should now give glory unto His greatness; for penetrating is His power, His hand lies heavy on me. . . . Base-minded men all three of you if by my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you like me sought those burrs to cleave, those puppets I mean that speak from our mouths, those anticks garnished in our colours. Is it not strange that I to whom they all have been beholding, is it not like that you to whom they have all been beholding, shall, were ye in that case that I am now, be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapt in a Player's hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you, and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is in his own conceit the only *Shakescene* in a country. O! that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions." . . .

The attack upon Shakespeare was presumably palpable to all readers in 1592, and Chettle, after Greene's death, lost no time in apologizing for it, in a work entitled "Kind Hart's Dream" (published in December 1592) thus—

"About three months since died Mr. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry booksellers' hands, among other his 'Groatsworth of Wit,' in which a letter written to divers playmakers is offensively by one or two of them taken. With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them (Mr. Calmont thinks this was Marlowe) I care not if I never be. The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that as I have moderated the heat of living writers, and might have used my own discretion, especially in such a case—the author being dead—that I did not, I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanour, no less civil than he is excellent in the qualities he professes; besides divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art."

The friends of Shakespeare had no reason to regret the attack made upon him when they saw its publisher so promptly and openly apologizing for his share in it.

The accepted tradition is that Marlowe, whom Greene so hysterically addressed in his "Groatsworth of Wit," had been associated with Shakespeare in the First Part of Henry VI., but the death of Marlowe from a wound received in a tavern brawl in 1592 would close his association with Shakespeare, on whom the task of producing Henry VI. devolved, though the efforts of friends may have called in other coadjutors.

It was a momentous period in Shakespeare's career. Could he, or could he not, make his mark as a tragedian when the manners of the time indicated that the theatre might become a potent factor in English society?

His comedy, Love's Labour's Lost, aroused some hopes. Costard, the first of a class which was to make him famous, Biron,* Rosaline, Armado, Holofernes, Moth and others have left among Englishmen phrases which are still in use.

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* A friend of the author insists that the following anecdote ought to be recorded in these pages. I fear that if it be condemned as a "musty superfluity," not he, but I, must be blamed. But I yield to his importunity. More than half a century ago I was one of ten or more in the house of a genial friend. In the company was a member of a learned profession known as Dick. He was deemed a humourist, but was addicted to coarse language, and consequently dreaded by some of his acquaintance. He was a great gossip, fond of giving and eating good dinners. On the occasion in question one of his victims said: "Why do you attack me in this way? Why don't you say something to R——, who will give you an answer?" Quoth Dick: "Pooh! R—— could not give you an answer or a quotation to save his life." "Oh!" interposed the host, "that is going too far; he is well up in Shakespeare, at any rate." "Not he," quoth Dick, "not a bit of it." "Be careful," I said, "there are two lines in Shakespeare which almost seem to have been written for you." Uproariously the quotation was called for, and given from Biron's sarcasm on Boyet—

> "Some carry-tale, some pleaseman, some slight zany,
> Some mumble news, some trencher-knight, some Dick."

Amused astonishment filled every countenance except that of Dick,

As the play was included in the First Folio, we are bound to accept it as the handiwork of Shakespeare with aid from others approved by himself.

Henry VI., Part 1, was produced at the Rose Theatre in 1592.

Mr. Sidney Lee records* that "on its first performance it won a popular triumph," and that when the second and third parts taught the elder dramatists that "their popularity was endangered by the young stranger . . . one veteran† uttered without delay a rancorous protest."

Having acquired standing ground, Shakespeare was able to appeal to his audience in language unqualified by the censure of others. Not only in the words of statesmen and soldiers, but in those of Jack Cade, John Holland, and Dick the butcher, the wit and humour of Shakespeare found acceptance.

How many meetings are held, in this 20th century, at which the confused ideas of John Holland‡ are reproduced

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who, after denying that there could be such a passage, when the book was produced, desperately clenched his teeth and lips, walked across the room to look at the book, dashed it on the floor, took up his hat and whip, and absconded without saying good-bye to his host. After his departure an old acquaintance ejaculated: "Well, I never saw Dick —— shut up before." Such virtue is there in a few words from Shakespeare.

* P. 56.

† Greene's "Groatsworth of Wit" previously quoted.

‡ *Holland.*—Well, I say it was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up.

Bevis.—O, miserable age! virtue is not regarded in handicraftsmen.

Holland.—The nobility think scorn to go in leather aprons.

Bevis.—Nay, more, the King's council are no good workmen.

Holland.—True; and yet it is said,—labour in thy vocation: which is as much as to say, as,—let the magistrates be labouring men; and therefore should we be magistrates.

Bevis.—Thou hast hit it. (Henry VI., Part 2, Act IV., Sc. 2.)

among ourselves, in many parts of the world, and are applauded by fit audiences!

It was not as a disloyal Englishman that Shakespeare thus depicted the follies of a crowd. His wondrous imagination of the spirit which was in man prompted him; and long years afterwards, in Coriolanus, he portrayed the humours of a Roman mob with the same penetrating precision.

When Henry VI. was written the remembrance of the horrors of the "Wars of the Roses" had not so faded from men's minds as to deprive the subject of deep interest, and the "scambling and unquiet time" had created feelings to which the dramatist could confidently appeal.

"The applause attending the completion of this historical trilogy (Mr. Sidney Lee says)* caused bewilderment in the theatrical profession." One immediate result was the publication of Greene's bitter attack upon Shakespeare, for the publication of which (as already mentioned) Chettle effusively apologized without delay.

It has been stated by some writers that Shakespeare's early efforts prove that he was an imitator of Marlowe. But it may fairly be urged that if in them his style was turgid he was but striving to please the public taste. Without obtaining public approval he could not hope to command attention; and if the audiences of the day applauded a "robustious and rough coming on" who can condemn him for gratifying them, until under the influence of his imagination their "weak spirits had been reared" to higher things?

Moreover, none can deny that the picture of England during the Wars of the Roses is still impressive in Shakespeare's pages. The men of the day still live in them; and Richard III., soon to be the subject of another drama, is

* Life of Shakespeare, p. 57.

allowed, while his sword is dripping with the blood of a murdered King, to say—

> Then since the heavens have shaped my body so,
> Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it.
> I have no brother; I am like no brother;
> And this word 'love,' which greybeards call divine,
> Be resident in men like one another,
> And not in me: I am myself alone.

Having considered Shakespeare's first English historical drama it will be convenient to refer to the others of the same class, in historical order,* except as regards Henry V., who as Shakespeare's national hero, triumphally hymned by him in his latest historic English play, will most fitly conclude the series.

Richard II., the child-king whose reign furnished a succession of events which historians have found it difficult to unravel, supplied Shakespeare's imagination with an engrossing and congenial task in depicting the varying phases of an ill-regulated mind confronted with the new forces which convulsed the country.

Wycliff, and the contest against corruptions in the Church, the rising of the insurgents around London, the contest with the arrogant Pope Boniface IX., the sudden assumption of almost absolute power by Richard while still young, and the acquiescence of Parliament to his claims in 1387, followed by his deposition and speedy death in a few brief years, have supplied materials for many volumes.

In Shakespeare whatever extraneous events he introduces are made ancillary to the study of the poor human mind of the child-king.

Nevertheless he puts into the mouths of others words which are still quoted.

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* Chronologically Romeo and Juliet would claim consideration at this point.

Old John of Gaunt is made to say—

All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to the wise man ports and happy havens.

. . . .

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-Paradise;
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world;
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Feared by their breed, and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home
For Christian service and true chivalry
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son;
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leased out,—I die pronouncing it—
Like to a tenement or pelting farm.
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds;
That England that was wont to conquer others
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.
Oh! would the scandal vanish with my life,
How happy then were my ensuing death!

When the same Gaunt, addressing Richard, says:

O, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,
Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd,
Which art possess'd now to depose thyself.
Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,

It were a shame to let this land by lease;
But, for thy world enjoying but this land
Is it not more than shame to shame it so?
Landlord of England art thou now, not king:
Thy state of law is bondslave to the law;
And—

K. Richard.—And thou, a lunatic lean-witted fool,
Presuming on an ague's privilege,
Dar'st with thy frozen admonition
Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood
With fury from his native residence.
Now, by my seat's right royal majesty,
Wert thou not brother to great Edward's son,
This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head
Should run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders.

Gaunt.—O, spare me not, my brother Edward's son
For that I was his father Edward's son.

. . . . . .

Gaunt dies immediately after this interview, and Richard with the petulance of a child declares—

Think what you will, we seize into our hands
His plate, his goods, his money, and his lands.

Returning from Ireland to meet the rebels in England, he exclaims—

I weep for joy
To stand upon my kingdom once again.
Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,
Should rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs:
As a long-parted mother with her child
Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,
And do thee favours with my royal hands.
Feed not thy sovereign's foe, my gentle earth,
Nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous sense;
But let thy spiders that suck up thy venom,
And heavy-gaited toads lie in their way,
Doing annoyance to the treacherous feet
Which with usurping steps do trample thee.
Yield stinging nettles to mine enemies;
And when they from thy bosom pluck a flower

Guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking adder
Whose double tongue may with a mortal touch
Throw death upon thy sovereign's enemies.
Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords;
This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones
Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king
Shall falter under foul rebellious arms.

. . . . . .

Discomfortable cousin! know'st thou not,
That when the searching eye of heaven is hid
Behind the globe, and lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen,
In murders, and in outrage, boldly here;
But when, from under this terrestrial ball,
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,
And darts his light through every guilty hole,
Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,
The cloak of night being plucked from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?
So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke—
Who all this while hath revell'd in the night,
Whilst we were wand'ring with the antipodes—
Shall see us rising in our throne the east,
His treasons will sit blushing in his face,
Not able to endure the sight of day,
But, self-affrighted, tremble at his sin.
Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king:
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord:
For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd,
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
A glorious angel: then, if angels fight,
Weak men must fall; for heaven still guards the right.

Enter SALISBURY.

Welcome my lord; How far off lies your power?
Salisbury.—Nor near, nor further off, my gracious lord,
Than this weak arm: Discomfort guides my tongue,
And bids me speak of nothing but despair.
One day too late, I fear, my noble lord,
Hath clouded all thy happy days on earth:
O, call back yesterday, bid time return

And thou shalt have twelve thousand fighting men!
To-day, to-day, unhappy day, too late,
O'erthrows thy joys, friends, fortunes, and thy state:
For all the Welshmen, hearing thou wert dead,
Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed, and fled.

Aumerle.—Comfort, my liege: why looks your grace so pale?

K. Richard.—But now, the blood of twenty thousand men
Did triumph in my face, and they are fled;
And, till so much blood thither come again,
Have I not reason to look pale and dead?
All souls that will be safe, fly from my side;
For time hath set a blot upon my pride.

Aumerle.—Comfort, my liege; remember who you are.

K. Richard.—I had forgot myself: Am I not king?
Awake, thou coward majesty! thou sleep'st.
Is not the king's name twenty thousand names?
Arm, arm, my name! a puny subject strikes
At thy great glory.—Look not to the ground,
Ye favourites of a king; Are we not high?
High be our thoughts: I know, my uncle York
Hath power enough to serve our turn. [*Enter Scroop.*

K. Richard.—Mine ear is open, and my heart prepar'd;
The worst is worldly loss, thou canst unfold.
Say, is my kingdom lost? why, 'twas my care;
And what loss is it, to be rid of care?
Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?
Greater he shall not be; if he serve God,
We'll serve Him too, and be his fellow so:
Revolt our subjects, that we cannot mend;
They break their faith to God, as well as us:
Cry, woe, destruction, ruin, loss, decay;
The worst is—death, and death will have his day.

Scroop.—Glad am I, that your highness is so armed
To bear the tidings of calamity. . . .
Thy very beadsmen learn to bend their bows
Of double-fatal yew against thy state;
Yea, distaff-women manage rusty bills
Against thy seat: both young and old rebel,
And all goes worse than I have power to tell.

K. Richard.—Too well, too well, thou tell'st a tale so ill.
Where is the earl of Wiltshire? where is Bagot?
What is become of Bushy? where is Green?

That they have let the dangerous enemy
Measure our confines with such peaceful steps?
If we prevail, their heads shall pay for it.
I warrant they have made peace with Bolingbroke.

Scroop.—Peace have they made with him, indeed, my lord.

K. Richard.—O villains, vipers, damn'd without redemption!
Dogs, easily won to fawn on any man!
Snakes, in my heart-blood warm'd, that sting my heart!
Three Judases, each one thrice worse than Judas!
Would they make peace? terrible hell make war
Upon their spotted souls for this offence!

Scroop.—Sweet love, I see, changing his property,
Turns to the sourest and most deadly hate:—
Again uncurse their souls; their peace is made
With heads, and not with hands: those whom you curse
Have felt the worst of death's destroying wound,
And lie full low, grav'd in the hollow ground.

Aumerle.—Where is the duke my father with his power?

K. Richard.—No matter where; of comfort no man speak:
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
Let's choose executors, and talk of wills:
And yet not so,—for what can we bequeath,
Save our deposed bodies to the ground?
Our lands, our lives and all are Bolingbroke's,
And nothing can we call our own, but death;
And that small model of the barren earth,
Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
For heaven's sake, let us sit upon the ground,
And tell sad stories of the death of kings:—
How some have been deposed, some slain in war,
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed;
Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping kill'd;
All murder'd:—For within the hollow crown,
That rounds the mortal temples of a king,
Keeps Death his court: and there the antick sits,
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp;
Allowing him a breath, a little scene
To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks;
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,—

As if this flesh, which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable; and, humour'd thus,
Comes at the last, and with a little pin
Bores through his castle wall, and—farewell king!
Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence; throw away respect;
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,
For you have but mistook me all this while;
I live with bread like you, feel want, taste grief,
Need friends:—Subjected thus,
How can you say to me—I am a king? . . .

Aumerle.—My father hath a power, enquire of him;
And learn to make a body of a limb.

K. Richard.—Thou chid'st me well:—Proud Bolingbroke, I come
To change blows with thee for our day of doom.
This ague-fit of fear is overblown;
An easy task it is, to win our own.—
Say, Scroop, where lies our uncle with his power?
Speak sweetly, man, although thy looks be sour.

Scroop.—Men judge by the complexion of the sky
The state and inclination of the day:
So may you by my dull and heavy eye,
My tongue hath but a heavier tale to say.
Your uncle York hath joined with Bolingbroke.

. . . . . .

K. Richard.— Thou hast said enough.—
Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead me forth
[To *Aumerle.*
Of that sweet way I was in to despair!
What say you now? What comfort have we now?
By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly,
That bids me be of comfort any more.
Go to Flint Castle; there I'll pine away;
A king, woe's slave, shall kingly woe obey.
That power I have, discharge; and let them go
To ear the land that hath some hope to grow,
For I have none:—Let no man speak again
To alter this, for counsel is but vain.

Aumerle.—My liege, one word.

K. Richard.— He does me double wrong
That wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue.
Discharge my followers, let them hence.

ACT III.—SCENE 3.

K. Richard (to *Northumberland*).—We are amazed, and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee
Because we thought ourself thy lawful king;
And if we be how dare thy joints forget
To pay their awful duty to our presence?
If we be not, show us the hand of God
That hath dismiss'd us from our stewardship;
For well we know, no hand of blood and bone
Can gripe the sacred handle of our sceptre,
Unless he do profane, steal, or usurp.
And though you think, that all, as you have done,
Have torn their souls, by turning them from us,
And we are barren, and bereft of friends;—
Yet know,—my master, God omnipotent,
Is mustering in his clouds, on our behalf,
Armies of pestilence; and they shall strike
Your children yet unborn, and unbegot,
That lift your vassal hands against my head,
And threat the glory of my precious crown.
Tell Bolingbroke (for yond', methinks, he stands),
That every stride he makes upon my land,
Is dangerous treason: He is come to ope
The purple testament of bleeding war;
But ere the crown he looks for live in peace,
Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers' sons
Shall ill become the flower of England's face;
Change the complexion of her maid-pale peace
To scarlet indignation, and bedew
Her pasture's grass with faithful English blood.

* * * * *

K. Richard.—O God! O God! that e'er this tongue of mine,
That laid the sentence of dread banishment
On yon proud man, should take it off again
With words of sooth! O, that I were as great
As is my grief, or lesser than my name!
Or that I could forget what I have been!
Or not remember what I must be now!
Swell'st thou, proud heart? I'll give thee scope to beat,
Since foes have scope to beat both thee and me.

Aumerle.—Northumberland comes back from Bolingbroke.

K. Richard.—What must the king do now? Must he submit?
The king shall do it. Must he be depos'd?
The king shall be contented: Must he lose
The name of king? o' God's name, let it go:
I'll give my jewels, for a set of beads;
My gorgeous palace, for a hermitage;
My gay apparel, for an almsman's gown;
My figured goblets, for a dish of wood;
My sceptre, for a palmer's walking staff;
My subjects, for a pair of carved saints;
And my large kingdom, for a little grave.
A little little grave, an obscure grave;
Or I'll be buried in the king's highway
Some way of common trade where subjects' feet
May hourly trample on their sovereign's head;
For on my heart they tread now whilst I live;
And buried once, why not upon my head?

. . . . . .

In the Fifth Act the doom of the time is reflected in the words of the Queen when she says to Richard—

What, is my Richard both in shape and mind
Transformed and weaken'd? Hath Bolingbroke deposed
Thine intellect? Hath he been in thy heart?

The last scene in which Shakespeare exhibits the reflective tendencies of the idle king is in his "dungeon at Pomfret"—

K. Richard.—I have been studying how I may compare
This prison, where I live, unto the world:
And, for because the world is populous,
And here is not a creature but myself,
I cannot do it;—Yet I'll hammer it out.
My brain I'll prove the female to my soul;
My soul, the father: and these two beget
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,
And these same thoughts people this little world,
In humours, like the people of this world,
For no thought is contented. The better sort,—
As thoughts of things divine,—are intermix'd
With scruples, and do set the word itself
Against the word:

As thus,—*Come, little ones*; and then again,—
It is as hard to come, as for a camel
To thread the postern of a needle's eye.
Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot
Unlikely wonders: how these vain weak nails
May tear a passage through the flinty ribs
Of this hard world, my ragged prison walls;
And, for they cannot, die in their own pride.
Thoughts tending to content, flatter themselves,—
That they are not the first of fortune's slaves,
Nor shall not be the last; like silly beggars,
Who, sitting in the stocks, refuge their shame,—
That many have, and others must sit there:
And in this thought they find a kind of ease,
Bearing their own misfortune on the back
Of such as have before endur'd the like.
Thus play I, in one person, many people,
And none contented: Sometimes am I king;
Then treason makes me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am: then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king;
Then am I king'd again; and, by-and-by,
Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing:—But, whate'er I am,
Nor I, nor any man, that but man is,
With nothing shall be pleas'd till he be eas'd
With being nothing.—Music do I hear? [*Music.*
Ha, ha! keep time:—How sour sweet musick is,
When time is broke, and no proportion kept!
So is it in the musick of men's lives.
And here have I the daintiness of ear,
To check time broke in a disorder'd string:
But, for the concord of my state and time,
Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.
I wasted time, and now doth time waste me.
For now hath time made me his numb'ring clock:
My thoughts are minutes; and, with sighs, they jar
Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,
Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.
Now, sir, the sounds that tell what hour it is,
Are clamorous groans, that strike upon my heart,

Which is the bell: So sighs, and tears, and groans,
Show minutes, times, and hours:—but my time
Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,
While I stand fooling here, his Jack o' the clock.
This musick mads me, let it sound no more;
For, though it have holp madmen to their wits,
In me, it seems it will make wise men mad.
Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me!
For 'tis a sign of love; and love to Richard
Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.

Enter GROOM.

Groom.—Hail, royal prince!

K. Richard.— Thanks, noble peer;
The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear.
What art thou? and how comest thou hither,
Where no man never comes, but that sad dog
That brings me food, to make misfortune live?

Groom.—I was a poor groom of thy stable, king,
When thou wert king; who, travelling towards York,
With much ado, at length have gotten leave
To look upon my sometimes master's face.
O, how it yearn'd my heart, when I beheld,
In London streets that coronation day,
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary!
That horse, that thou so often hast bestrid;
That horse, that I so carefully have dress'd!

K. Richard.—Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,
How went he under him?

Groom.—So proudly, as if he disdain'd the ground.

K. Richard.—So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back!
That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand;
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.
Would he not stumble? Would he not fall down,
(Since pride must have a fall) and break the neck
Of that proud man, that did usurp his back?
Forgiveness, horse! why do I rail on thee,
Since thou, created to be aw'd by man,
Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse;
And yet I bear a burden like an ass,
Spur-gall'd, and tir'd by jauncing Bolingbroke.

Enter KEEPER, *with a dish.*

Keep.—Fellow, give place; here is no longer stay.

[*To the* Groom.

K. Richard.—If thou love me, 'tis time thou wert away.

Groom.—What my tongue dares not, that my heart shall say.

[*Exit.*

Keep.—My lord, wilt please you to fall to?

K. Richard.—Taste of it first, as thou art wont to do.

Keep.—My lord, I dare not; sir Pierce of Exton, who
Lately came from the king, commands the contrary.

K. Richard.—The devil take Henry of Lancaster, and thee!
Patience is stale, and I am weary of it.

[*Beats the Keeper.*

Keep.—Help, help, help!

Enter EXTON *and armed men.*

K. Richard.—How now? what means Death in this rude assault?
Villain, thine own hand yields death's instrument.
(*Snatching an axe from a servant, and killing him.*)
Go thou, and fill another room in hell.
(*He kills another. Then Exton strikes him down.*)
That hand shall burn in never-quenching fire
That staggers thus my person. Exton, thy fierce hand
Hath with the king's blood stained the king's own land.
Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high;
While my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die. [*Dies.*

Exton.—As full of valour as of royal blood:
Both have I spilled; O would the deed were good!
For now the devil that told me I did well,
Says that this deed is chronicled in hell.

When Shakespeare's Henry IV., Part I., was put on the stage in 1596 or 1597, his hold upon public attention was complete. Not only his King John, Richard II. and Richard III., but his Romeo and Juliet, and his Merchant of Venice had made known to the London world that a prophet had arisen amongst them, able to teach them higher things than had been "dreamt of in their philosophy." It is true that he gave them fun and frolic also. The world furnished materials and he used them lavishly. In another part of this work the question whether he was too lavish in some of his presentments may be dealt with. Here the play itself must be described.

The affection which Shakespeare displayed in dealing with Prince Hal did not blind him to the fault of his father who confesses (Part II., King Henry IV., Act IV.)—

> God knows, my son,
> By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways
> I met this crown. . . .
> How I came by the crown, O God! forgive.

Shakespeare has already (in the First Part of Henry IV., Act I., Scene iii.) prepared us for the noble change which his favourite Prince Hal had purposed. Surrounded by and interchanging loose jests with Falstaff and Poins, he makes him say after loose conversation with them—

> I know you all, and will awhile uphold
> The unyoked humour of your idleness;
> Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
> Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
> To smother up his beauty from the world,
> That when he please again to be himself,
> Being wanted, he may be more wondered at
> By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
> Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
>
> . . . .
>
> So when this loose behaviour I throw off,
> And pay the debt I never promised,
> By how much better than my word I am,
> By so much shall I falsify men's hopes.
>
> . . . .
>
> I'll so offend, to make offence a skill;
> Redeeming time when men least think I will.

Bearing in mind the Prince's motives thus announced beforehand, we see the fitness of his reply to his father's mockery (Henry IV., Act IV., Scene 5.)

> Harry the Fifth is crowned: up vanity!
> Down royal state! all you sage counsellors, hence!
> And to the English court assemble now
> From every region apes of idleness!

Now, neighbour confines, purge you of your scum:
Have you a ruffian that will swear, drink, dance,
Revel the night, rob, murder, and commit
The oldest sins the newest kind of ways?
Be happy, he will trouble you no more;
England shall double gild his treble guilt,
England shall give him office, honour, might;
For the fifth Harry from curb'd license plucks
The muzzle of restraint, and the wild dog
Shall flesh his tooth on every innocent.
O my poor kingdom. . . .

We see also the fitness (remembering the Prince's soliloquy just quoted) of his reply to his father's lamentation—

If I do feign,
O let me in my present wildness die,
And never live to show the incredulous world
The noble change that I have purposed!

The father and son being reconciled, the dying king declares—

O my son,
God put it in thy mind to take it hence,
That thou might'st win the more thy father's love,
Pleading so wisely in excuse of it.

Tempting as the subject is, it would swell these pages to too great bulk if an attempt were made to depict fully in them the abounding drollery and wit of Falstaff. Nor can it be necessary. The praise of it has been "writ large" in English literature from the days of Shakespeare until now. Henry IV. was piratically printed in London in 1598, with a title page drawing attention to the "humorous conceits of Sir John Falstaff," and other editions followed.

Never was such a pair as the humorous Prince Hal and the Fat Knight. "Falstaff the inimitable!" says burly Jonson, perforce shaking his own vast sides.

"Antiquity," says Thomas Campbell, "has nothing like him, and the world will never look upon his like again."

"We oftener laugh with than at him," says Mackenzie, "for his humour is infinite and his wit admirable."

"His lies, his vanity, and his cowardice, too gross to deceive" (says Cumberland), "were to be so ingenious as to give delight; his cunning evasions, his witty resources, his mock solemnity, his vapouring self-consequence, were to furnish a continual feast for his royal companion. He was not only to be witty himself, but the cause of wit in other people—a whetstone for raillery—a buffoon whose very person was a jest. Compounded of these humours, Shakespeare produced the character of Sir John Falstaff, a character which neither ancient nor modern comedy has ever equalled, which was so much the favourite of its author as to be introduced into three several plays, and which is likely to be the idol of the English stage as long as it shall speak the language of Shakespeare."

Perhaps the best way to embody in these pages the character of Falstaff as drawn by Shakespeare is to extract a few passages from the plays. The following scene occurs at the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap.

What can exceed the humour, yet the abasement, shown by Falstaff, when Prince Henry upbraids him for running away at Gadshill, where, after the carriers had been robbed by Falstaff and others, Prince Henry and Poins attack them, and seize the booty—the virtue of the jest, according to Poins, who persuades the Prince to join him in it, being the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper?

The Prince and Poins reach the tavern long before Falstaff, who of course imagines that they ran thither long before the robbery.

In he comes, fat, hot, and as savage as his cowardice permits, because of the lost booty.

Enter FALSTAFF, GADSHILL, BARDOLPH *and* PETO.

Poins.—Welcome, Jack. Where hast thou been?

Falstaff.—A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance, too! marry, and amen!—Give me a cup of sack, boy. Ere I lead this life long, I'll sew netherstocks, and mend them, and foot them too. A plague of all cowards! Give me a cup of sack, rogue. Is there no virtue extant? [*He drinks.*

P. Henry.—Didst thou never see Titan kiss a dish of butter? pitiful-hearted Titan, that melted at the sweet tale of the sun! if thou didst, then behold that compound.

Falstaff.—You rogue, here's lime in this sack, too: there is nothing but roguery to be found in villainous man. Yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it: a villainous coward.—Go thy ways, old Jack: die when thou wilt; if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a herring. There live not three good men unhanged in England: and one of them is fat and grows old. God help the while!—a bad world, I say! I would I were a weaver! I could sing psalms, or anything. A plague of all cowards, I say still.

P. Henry.—How now, woolsack, what mutter you?

Falstaff.—A king's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom, with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You a Prince of Wales!

P. Henry.—Why, you round man! what's the matter?

Falstaff.—Are you not a coward? Answer me to that; and Poins there?

Poins.—Zounds, ye fat paunch, an' ye call me coward, I'll stab thee.

Falstaff.—I call thee coward! I'll see thee damned ere I call thee coward: but I would give a thousand pounds I could run as fast as thou canst. You are straight enough in the shoulders, you care not who sees your back. Call you that, backing of your friends? A plague upon such backing! give me them that will face me. Give me a cup of sack: I am a rogue if I drunk to-day.

P. Henry.—O, villain! thy lips are scarce wiped since thou drunk'st last.

Falstaff.—All's one for that. A plague of all cowards, I say still. [*He drinks.*

P. Henry.—What's the matter?

Falstaff.—What's the matter? there be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pounds this morning.

P. Henry.—Where is it, Jack? where is it?

Falstaff.—Where is it? taken from us it is: a hundred upon poor four of us.

P. Henry.—What, a hundred, man?

Falstaff.—I am a rogue if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have 'scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet: four through the hose: my buckler cut through and through: my sword hacked like a handsaw—*ecce signum.* I never dealt better since I was a man: all would not do. A plague of all cowards!—Let them speak: if they speak more or less than truth, they are villains, and the sons of darkness.

P. Henry.—Speak, sirs; how was it?

Gadshill.—We four set upon some dozen,—

Falstaff.—Sixteen, at least, my lord.

Gadshill.—And bound them.

Peto.—No, no, they were not bound.

Falstaff.—You rogue, they were bound, every man of them: or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

Gadshill.—As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us,—

Falstaff.—And unbound the rest, and then come in the other.

P. Henry.—What, fought ye with them all?

Falstaff.—All? I know not what ye call all; but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish. If there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then I am no two-legged creature.

P. Henry.—Pray God, you have not murdered some of them.

Falstaff.—Nay, that's past praying for: I have peppered two of them: two I am sure I have paid; two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal,—If I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward;—here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me,—

P. Henry.—What, four? thou said'st but two, even now.

Falstaff.—Four, Hal: I told thee four.

Poins.—Ay, he said four.

Falstaff.—These four came all afront and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado, but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

P. Henry.—Seven? why, there were but four, even now.

Falstaff.—In buckram.

Poins.—Ay, four, in buckram suits.

Falstaff.—Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

P. Henry.—Prithee, let him alone, we shall have more anon.

Falstaff.—Dost thou hear me, Hal?

P. Henry.—Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

Falstaff.—Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram, that I told thee of,—

P. Henry.—So, two more already.

Falstaff.—Their points being broken,

Poins.—Down fell their hose.

Falstaff.—Began to give me ground: but I followed me close, came in foot and hand, and with a thought, seven of the eleven I paid.

P. Henry.—Oh! monstrous! eleven buckram men grown out of two!

Falstaff.—But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves, in Kendal green, came at my back and let drive at me;—for it was so dark, Hal, that thou could'st not see thy hand.

P. Henry.—These lies are like the father that begets them; gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why thou clay-brained guts, thou knotty-pated fool; thou obscene, greasy, tallow-keech;

Falstaff.—What, art thou mad? art thou mad? is not the truth the truth?

P. Henry.—Why, how could'st thou know these men in Kendal green, when it was so dark thou could'st not see thy hand? come, tell us your reason; what sayest thou to this?

Poins.—Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.

Falstaff.—What, upon compulsion? Zounds, were I at the strappado, or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion! if reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason, upon compulsion, I.

P. Henry.—I'll be no longer guilty of this sin; this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horse back-breaker, this huge hill of flesh;

Falstaff.—'Sblood, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's tongue, you stock-fish; O! for breath to utter what is like thee; you tailor's yard, you sheath, you bow-case—

P. Henry.—Well, breathe awhile, and then to it again: and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this.

Poins.—Mark, Jack.

P. Henry.—We two saw you four set on four; you bound them and were masters of their wealth.—Mark, now, how plain a tale shall put you down.—Then did we two set on you four; and, with a word outfaced you from your prize, and have it; yea, and can show it you here in the house:—and, Falstaff, you carried yourself away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy, and still ran and roared as ever I heard bull-calf. What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done; and then say it was in fight! What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out, to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

Poins.—Come, let's hear, Jack: what trick hast thou now?

Falstaff.—By the Lord, I knew ye, as well as he that made ye. Why, hear ye, my masters. Was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules;—but beware instinct; the lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter; I was a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself, and thee, during my life; I, for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money.—Hostess, clap to the doors. Watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good-fellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry? Shall we have a play extempore?

P. Henry.—Content; and the argument shall be, thy running away.

Falstaff.—Ah! no more of that Hal, an thou lovest me.

But not even this can abash Falstaff's impudence. While he sends some one packing from the door, Bardolph tells the tale—how Falstaff hacked his own sword with his dagger, and persuaded his accomplices to do the same.

Falstaff re-enters, and is thus saluted by the Prince:—

P. Henry.—Here comes lean Jack, here comes bare-bone. How now, my sweet creature of bombast? How long is't ago, Jack, since thou sawest thine own knee?

Falstaff.—My own knee? when I was about thy years, Hal, I was not an eagle's talon in the waist. I could have crept into any alderman's thumb-ring. A plague of sighing and grief! it blows a man up like a bladder. There's villainous news abroad: here was Sir John Bracy from your father, you must to the court in the morning. That same mad fellow of the North, Percy; and he of Wales that gave Amaimon the bastinado, and swore the devil his true liegeman upon the cross of a Welsh hook.—What a plague call you him?

Poins.—O, Glendower.

Falstaff.—Owen, Owen; the same—and his son-in-law Mortimer; and old Northumberland;—and that sprightly Scot of Scots, Douglas, that runs o' horseback up a hill perpendicular.

P. Henry.—He that rides at high speed, and with his pistol kills a sparrow flying.

Falstaff.—You have hit it.

P. Henry.—So did he never the sparrow.

Falstaff.—Well, that rascal hath good mettle in him; he will not run.

P. Henry.—Why, what a rascal art thou then, to praise him so for running.

Falstaff.—O' horseback, ye cuckoo! but afoot, he will not budge a foot.

P. Henry.—Yes, Jack, upon instinct.

Falstaff.—I grant ye, upon instinct. Well, he is there too, and one Mordake, and a thousand blue-caps more: Worcester is stolen away to-night: thy father's beard is turned white with the news: you may buy land now as cheap as stinking mackerel. . . . But, tell me, Hal, are thou not horribly afeard? Thou being heir-apparent, could the world pick thee out three such enemies again, as that fiend Douglas, that spirit Percy, and that devil Glendower? Art thou not horribly afraid? doth not thy blood thrill at it?

P. Henry.—Not a whit, i' faith; I lack some of thy instinct.

Falstaff.—Well, thou wilt be horribly chid to-morrow, when thou comest to thy father: if thou love me practise an answer.

P. Henry.—Do thou stand for my father, and examine me upon the particulars of my life.

Falstaff.—Shall I?—content. This chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown.

P. Henry.—Thy state is taken for a joint-stool, thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown!

Falstaff.—Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of thee, now shalt thou be moved.—Give me a cup of sack, to make mine eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept: for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in king Cambyses' vein.

P. Henry.—Well, here is my leg.

Falstaff.—And here is my speech:—Stand aside, nobility.

Hostess.—This is excellent sport i' faith.

Falstaff.—Weep not, sweet queen, for trickling tears are vain.

Hostess.—Oh! the father! how he holds his countenance.

Falstaff.—For God's sake, lords, convey our tristful queen. For tears do stop the flood-gates of her eyes.

Hostess.—Oh! rare; he doth it as like one of these harlotry players, as ever I see.

Falstaff.—Peace, good pint-pot: peace, good tickle-brain.—Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied: for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears. That thou art my son, I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion: but chiefly a villainous trick of thine eye and a foolish hanging of thy nether lip, that doth warrant me.

If then, thou be son to me, here lies the point:—Why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher, and eat blackberries? a question not to be asked. Shall the son of England prove a thief, and take purses? a question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry, which thou has often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch:—this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile: so doth the company thou keepest:—for Harry now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion;—not in words only, but in woes also:—And yet there is a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

P. Henry.—What manner of man, an' it like your majesty?

Falstaff.—A good portly man i' faith, and a corpulent: of a cheerful look; a pleasing eye; and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or by 'r Lady, inclining to three-score; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff:—if that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for Harry, I see virtue in his looks.

If, then, the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff: him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me, now, thou naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month?

P. Henry.—Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father.

Falstaff.—Depose me! If thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker or a poulter's hare.

P. Henry.—Well, here am I set.

Falstaff.—And here I stand:—judge, my masters.

P. Henry.—Now, Harry, whence come you?

Falstaff.—My noble Lord, from Eastcheap.

P. Henry.—The complaints of thee are grievous.

Falstaff.—'S blood, my lord, they are false:—nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince, i' faith.

P. Henry.—Swearest thou, ungracious boy? Henceforth, ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace: there is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man: a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that swoln parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years?

Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? Wherein neat

and cleanly, but to carve a capon, and eat it? Wherein cunning, but in craft? Wherein crafty, but in villainy? Wherein villainous, but in all things? Wherein worthy, but in nothing?

Falstaff.—I would your grace would take me with you. Whom means your grace?

P. Henry.—That villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

Falstaff.—My lord, the man I know.

P. Henry.—I know thou dost.

Falstaff.—But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old (the more the pity), his white hairs do witness it; but that he is (saving your reverence), unworthy, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned: if to be fat, be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord: banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins: but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff; and therefore more valiant, being as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company; banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

P. Henry.—I do, I will. [*A knocking heard.*

[*Exeunt* Hostess, Francis, and Bardolph.

Re-enter BARDOLPH *running.*

Bardolph.—O, my lord, my lord: the sheriff with a most monstrous watch, is at the door.

Falstaff.—Out, you rogue! play out the play; I have much to say in behalf of that Falstaff.

Re-enter HOSTESS *hastily.*

Hostess.—O, my lord, my lord:—

Falstaff.—Heigh, heigh! the devil rides upon a fiddlestick; what's the matter?

Hostess.—The sheriff and all the watch are at the door; they are come to search the house; shall I let them in?

Falstaff.—Dost thou hear, Hal? never call a true piece of gold a counterfeit: thou art essentially mad, without seeming so.

P. Henry.—And thou a natural coward, without instinct.

Falstaff.—I deny your major; if you will deny the sheriff, so; if not, let him enter: if I become not a cart as well as another man, a plague on my bringing up! I hope I shall as soon be strangled with a halter, as another.

P. Henry.—Go, hide thee behind the arras;—the rest walk up above. Now my masters, for a true face, and good conscience.

Falstaff.—Both which I have had; but their date is out, and therefore I'll hide me.

Falstaff is not a coward so much from mere fear as from a fondness for ease, and being pretty confident that Prince Henry can settle with the sheriff, goes to sleep behind the arras, and his pockets are searched. In them is a bill of particulars.

P. Henry.—This oily rascal is known as well as Paul's. Go, call him forth.

Poins—Falstaff!—fast asleep behind the arras, and snorting like a horse.

P. Henry.—Hark, how hard he fetches breath. Search his pockets. (Poins *searches.*) What hast thou found?

Poins.—Nothing but papers, my lord.

P. Henry.—Let's see what they be; read them.

Poins.—Item, a capon 2s. 2d.
Item, sauce 4d.
Item, sack, two gallons 5s. 8d.
Item, anchovies and sack after supper 2s. 6d.
Item, bread, a halfpenny.

P. Henry.—O monstrous! but one halfpenny worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack! what there is else, keep close; we'll read it at more advantage: there let him sleep till day.

I'll to the court in the morning: we must all to the wars, and thy place shall be honourable.

I'll procure this fat rogue a charge of foot; and I know his death will be a march of twelve score. The money shall be paid back with advantage. Be with me betimes in the morning, and so good morrow, Poins.

Out of what small trifles Shakespeare can make fun. The searching of his pockets gives occasion to Falstaff to complain of losing property in the house.

Falstaff.—Wilt thou believe me, Hal? I have lost three or four bonds of forty pound apiece, and a seal-ring of my grandfather's.

P. Henry.—A trifle, some eightpenny matter.

Hostess.—So I told him, my lord; and I said, I heard your grace say so: and my lord he speaks most vilely of you, like a foul-mouthed man as he is; and said he would cudgel you.

P. Henry.—What! he did not?

Hostess.—There's neither faith, truth, nor womanhood in me else.

Falstaff.—There's no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune; nor no more truth in thee than in a drawn fox; and for womanhood maid Marian may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee. Go, you thing, go.

Hostess.—Say, what thing? what thing?

Falstaff.—What thing? why a thing to thank God for.

Hostess.—I am no thing to thank God for, I would thou shouldst know it: I am an honest man's wife: and setting thy knighthood aside thou art a knave to call me so.

. . . . . .

P. Henry.—Thou sayest true, hostess, and he slanders thee most grossly.

Hostess.—So he doth you, my lord; and said this other day that you ought him a thousand pound.

P. Henry.—Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

Falstaff.—A thousand pound, Hal?—a million; thy love is worth a million; thou owest me thy love.

Hostess.—Nay, my lord, he called you Jack, and said he would cudgel you.

Falstaff.—Did I, Bardolph?

Bardolph.—Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

Falstaff.—Yea, if he said my ring was copper.

P. Henry.—I say 'tis copper: Darest thou be as good as thy word now?

Falstaff.—Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art but man, I dare: but as thou art prince I fear thee, as I fear the roaring of the lion's whelp.

P. Henry.—And why not as the lion?

Falstaff.—The king himself is to be feared as the lion. Dost thou think I'll fear thee as I fear thy father? nay, an I do, I pray my girdle may break.

P. Henry.—Oh! if it should. . . . But, sirrah, there's no room for faith, truth, nor honesty in this bosom of thine. . . . Charge an honest woman with picking thy pocket! Why thou impudent, embossed rascal, if there were anything in thy pocket but tavern reckonings, and one poor pennyworth of sugar candy, to make thee longwinded; if thy pocket were enriched with any other injuries but these, I am a villain. And yet you will stand to it; you will not pocket up wrong. Art thou not ashamed?

Falstaff.—Dost thou hear, Hal? thou knowest, in the state of innocency Adam fell; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the

days of villainy? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty. You confess, then, that you picked my pocket

P. Henry.—It appears so by the story.

Falstaff.—Hostess, I forgive thee. Go, make ready breakfast; love thy husband, look to thy servants, cherish thy guests; thou shalt find me tractable to any honest reason; thou seest, I am pacified. Still?—Nay, prithee, be gone. [*Exit* Hostess.

Now, Hal, to the news at court—For the robbery, lad, how is that answered?

P. Henry.—Oh, my sweet beef, I must still be good angel to thee.—The money is paid back again.

Falstaff.—O, I do not like that paying back again, 'tis a double labour.

P. Henry.—I am good friends with my father, and may do anything.

Falstaff.—Rob me the exchequer, the first thing thou doest, and do it with unwashed hands too.

Bardolph.—Do, my lord.

P. Henry.—I have procured thee, Jack, a charge of foot.

Falstaff,—I would it had been of horse? Where shall I find one that can steal well? O, for a fine thief, of the age of two and twenty or thereabouts! I am heinously unprovided. Well, God be thanked for these rebels, they offend none but the virtuous; I laud them, I praise them.

Next we have him recruiting, and who but Shakespeare could have given us such a picture of the misuse of the king's press?

Falstaff.—If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a soused gurnet. I have misused the king's press damnably. I have got in exchange of a hundred and fifty soldiers, three hundred and odd pounds. I press me none but good householders, yeomen's sons: inquire me out contracted bachelors, such as had been asked twice at the banns; such a commodity of warm slaves, as had as lief hear the devil as a drum; such as fear the report of a caliver, worse than a struck fowl, or a hurt wild-duck. I pressed me none but such toasts-and-butter, with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins' heads, and they have bought out their services; and now my whole charge consists of ancients, corporals, lieutenants, gentlemen of companies, slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth, where the glutton's dogs licked his sores: and such indeed as were never soldiers: but discarded unjust serving men, younger sons to younger brothers, revolted tapsters, and ostlers trade-fallen: the cankers of a calm world, and a long peace: ten times more

dishonourable ragged than an old-faced ancient; and such have I to fill up the room of them that have bought out their services, that you would think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals, lately come from swine-keeping, from eating draff and husks. A mad fellow met me on the way, and told me I had unloaded all the gibbets, and pressed the dead bodies. No eye hath seen such scarecrows. I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat: Nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they had gyves on; for, indeed, I had the most of them out of prison. There's but a shirt and a half in all my company; and the half-shirt is two napkins tacked together, and thrown over the shoulders like a herald's coat without sleeves; and the shirt, to say the truth, stolen from my host at St. Alban's, or the red-nose innkeeper of Daintry. But that's all one; they'll find linen enough on every hedge.

No eye, he says, has seen such scarecrows. Yet, when Prince Henry tells him they are pitiful rascals, it would seem that he had made most provident calculations in the matter.

Falstaff.—Tut, tut, good enough to toss: food for powder, food for powder: they'll fill a pit, as well as better: tush, man, mortal men, mortal men.

Westmoreland.—Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are exceeding poor and bare;—too beggarly.

Falstaff.—Faith, for their poverty.—I know not where they had that:—and for the bareness, I am sure they never learned that of me.

P. Henry.—No, I'll be sworn; unless you call three fingers on the ribs bare. But, Sirrah, make haste: Percy is already in the field.

Falstaff.—What? is the king encamped?

Westmoreland.—He is, Sir John; I fear we shall stay too long.

Falstaff.—Well,—to the latter end of a fray and the beginning of a feast, fits a dull fighter, and a keen guest.

And no doubt his soldiers thought him a blood-thirsty fellow who would lead them to glory. But hear him reason about the matter with himself.

Falstaff.—Hal, if thou see me down in the battle, and bestride me,—so: 'tis a point of friendship.

P. Henry.—Nothing but a Colossus can do thee that friendship. Say thy prayers, and farewell.

Falstaff.—I would it were bed-time, Hal, and all well.

P. Henry.—Why thou owest God a death. [*Exit.*

Falstaff.—'Tis not due yet. I would be loth to pay him before his day. What need I be so forward with him that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter. Honour pricks me on: yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on? how then? Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is honour? A word. What is that word, honour?—Air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. 'Tis insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it:—therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon, and so ends my catechism.

Douglas gives him a chance of glory, but Falstaff is too modest for it, and shams death. Prince Henry, with a touch of true compassion which would have reached a heart not so utterly selfish as Falstaff's, exclaims,

What, old acquaintance, could not all this flesh
Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell!
I could have better spared a better man.
O, I should have a heavy miss of thee
If I were much in love with vanity.
Death has not struck so fat a deer to-day,
Though many dearer in this bloody fray:—
Embowelled will I see thee by and by:—
Till then in blood by noble Percy lie. [*Exit.*

Falstaff (rising slowly). Embowelled! if thou embowel me to-day, I'll give you leave to powder me, and eat me too, to-morrow. 'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot tergamant Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit: To die is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the counterfeit of a man, who hath not the life of a man: but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. The better part of valour is, discretion; in the which better part I have saved my life. 'Zounds, I am afraid of this gunpowder, Percy, though he be dead. How, if he should counterfeit too and rise? I am afraid he would prove the better counterfeit. Therefore, I'll make him sure; —yea! and I'll swear I killed him. Why may he not rise, as well as I? Nothing confutes me but eyes, and nobody sees me. Therefore, sirrah, with a new wound in your thigh, come you along with me.

[*Takes* Hotspur *on his back.*

Re-enter PRINCE HENRY *and* PRINCE JOHN.

P. Henry.—Come, brother John, full bravely hast thou fleshed
Thy maiden sword.
P. John.— But soft! whom have we here?
Did you not tell me this fat man was dead?
P. Henry.—I did; I saw him dead, breathless and bleeding
Upon the ground.
Art thou alive? or, is it phantasy
That plays upon our eyesight? I pr'ythee speak;
We will not trust our eyes without our ears:—
Thou art not what thou seem'st.

Falstaff.—No, that's certain; I am not a double man: but if I be not Jack Falstaff, then am I a Jack. There is Percy: (*throwing the body down*) if your father will do me any honour,—so; if not, let him kill the next Percy himself. I look to be either earl or duke, I can assure you.

P. Henry.—Why, Percy I killed myself, and saw thee dead.

Falstaff.—Didst thou?—Lord, lord, how this world is given to lying! I grant you I was down, and out of breath; and so was he: but we rose both at an instant, and fought a long hour by Shrewesbury clock. If I may be believed—so; if not, let them that should reward valour, bear the sin upon their own heads. I'll take it upon my death, I gave him this wound in the thigh; if the man were alive, and would deny it, I would make him eat a piece of my sword.

P. John.—This is the strangest tale that e'er I heard.

P. Henry.—This is the strangest fellow, brother John: come, bring your luggage nobly on your back: for my part, if a lie may do thee grace, I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.

We must not suppose, because we see behind the scenes, that Falstaff appeared to others as cowardly as he does to us. Shakespeare gives him credit amongst his contemporaries, and brings him back fat, and well-liking from Shrewsbury; when, whom should he meet but the celebrated Chief Justice, who once committed Prince Henry, and who had lately made some awkward inquiries about the Gadshill exploit? Falstaff's page tells him who is near. Falstaff affects deafness; and after bandying words with the Chief Justice's follower, who insists on calling Falstaff's

attention to the great man, finally pretends suddenly to see his lordship.

Falstaff.—My good lord! God give your lordship good time of day. I am glad to see your lordship abroad. I heard say your lordship was sick. I hope your lordship goes abroad by advice. Your lordship, though not clean past your youth, hath yet some smack of age in you, some relish of the saltness of time; and, I most humbly beseech your lordship to have a reverend care of your health.

Chief Justice.—Sir John! I sent for you before your expedition to Shrewsbury.

Falstaff.—An't please your lordship, I hear, His Majesty has returned with some discomfort from Wales.

Chief Justice.—I talk not of His Majesty; you would not come when I sent for you.

Falstaff.—And I hear, moreover, that His Highness has fallen into this same apoplexy.

Chief Justice.—Well, heaven mend him!—I pray you, let me speak with you.

Falstaff.—This apoplexy is, as I take it, a kind of lethargy, an't please your lordship; a kind of sleeping in the blood, a tingling.

Chief Justice.—What tell you me of it? be it as it is.

Falstaff.—It hath its original from much grief; from study and perturbation of the brain; I have read the cause of its effects, in Galen; it is a kind of deafness.

Chief Justice.—I think you are fallen into the disease; for you hear not what I say to you.

Falstaff.—Very well, my lord, very well: rather an't please you, it is the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking, that I am troubled withal.

Chief Justice.—To punish you by the heels, would amend the attention of your ears: and I care not if I do become your physician.

Falstaff.—I am as poor as Job, my lord, but not so patient: your lordship may minister the potion of imprisonment to me, in respect of poverty: but how I should be your patient to follow your prescriptions, the wise may make some dram of a scruple, or indeed a scruple itself.

Chief Justice.—I sent for you when there were some matters against you for your life, to come speak with me.

Falstaff.—As I was then advised by my learned counsel in the laws of this land-service, I did not come.

Chief Justice.—Well, the truth is, Sir John, you live in great infamy.

Falstaff.—He that buckles him in my belt, cannot live in less.

Chief Justice.—Your means are very slender, and your waste is great.

Falstaff.—I would it were otherwise: I would my means were greater, and my waist slenderer.

Falstaff, having made another lucky hit, by capturing a knight, starts through Gloucestershire, where he has Robert Shallow already tempering between his finger and thumb. Prince John, whose good opinion he has sought, bids him farewell, saying, "I in my condition shall better speak of you than you deserve." [*Exit.*

Falstaff.—I would you had but the wit: 'twere better than your dukedom. Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me: nor a man cannot make him laugh:—but that's no marvel, he drinks no wine. There's never any of these demure boys come to any proof, for thin drink doth so over-cool their blood that . . . generally fools and cowards; which some of us should be too, but for inflammation. A good sherris-sack hath a two-fold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish, and dull and crudy vapours which environ it: makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes: which delivered o'er to the voice (the tongue) which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is,—the warming of the blood: which, before, cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice: but the sherris warms it and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extreme. It illumineth the face; which as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of his little kingdom, man, to arm: and then the vital commoners, and inland petty spirits, muster me all to their captain, the heart: who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage: and this valour comes of sherris:—so that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack: for that sets it a-work; and learning a mere hoard of gold, kept by a devil: till sack commences it, and sets it in act and use. Thereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant: for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath like lean, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and tilled with excellent endeavour of drinking good, and good store of fertile sherris:—that he is become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them, should be—to forswear thin potations, and addict themselves to sack.

The old King dies, while Shallow's money is melting

under the weight of Falstaff's attacks upon his folly. Prince Henry succeeds to the throne,—and Falstaff—pleasure bent—hastens to London, to show that the laws of England are at his commandment. Happy are they which have been his friends, and "woe to my Lord Chief Justice."

But vice never triumphs in the long run, under Shakespeare's rule, and he has prepared what the old Iron Duke might have called a great moral lesson for Sir John.

He intercepts the King with his train.

Falstaff.—God save thy grace, King Hal! my royal Hal!
Pistol.—The heavens thee guard and keep, most royal imp of fame.
Falstaff.—God save thee, my sweet boy!
King.—My lord Chief Justice, speak to that vain man.
Chief Justice.—Have you your wits? know you what 'tis you speak?
Falstaff.—My king! my Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!
King.—I know thee not, old man: Fall to thy prayers:
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
I have long dreamed of such a kind of man,
So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane;
But, being awake, I do despise my dream:
Make less thy body, hence, and more thy grace:
Leave gormandizing: know the grave doth gape
For thee, thrice wider than for other men:—*
Reply not to me with a fool-born jest;
Presume not that I am the thing I was:
For heaven doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turned away my former self:
So will I those that kept me company.
When thou dost hear I am as I have been,
Approach me; and thou shalt be as thou wast,
The tutor and the feeder of my riots:
Till then, I banish thee on pain of death,—
As I have done the rest of my misleaders,—
Not to come near our person by ten mile.

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* It is well to observe the break in the King's speech at the word "men," as indicated by the punctuation. Falstaff was about to make a jest to show that the grave could not avoid gaping wide for his bulk, which Henry perceives, and rebukes in his new character.

For competence of life, I will allow you,
That lack of means enforce you not to evil:
And, as we hear you do reform yourselves,
We will, according to your strength and qualities,
Give you advancement.—Be it your charge, my lord,
To see performed the tenor of our word.

[*Exeunt* King and train.

Falstaff.—Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound.

Shallow.—Ay, marry, Sir John, which I beseech you, to let me have home with me.

Falstaff.—That can hardly be, Master Shallow. Do not you grieve at this: I shall be sent for in private to him: look you, he must seem thus to the world. Fear not your advancement. I will be the man, yet, that shall make you great.

Shallow.—I cannot perceive how, unless you give me your doublet, and stuff me out with straw. I beseech you, good Sir John, let me have five hundred out of my thousand.

Falstaff.—Sir, I will be as good as my word: this that you heard was but a colour.

Shallow.—A colour, I fear, that you will die in, Sir John.

Falstaff.—Fear no colours;—go with me to dinner. Come, Lieutenant Pistol;—come, Bardolph:—I shall be sent for soon at night.

(*Re-enter* PRINCE JOHN, *the* CHIEF JUSTICE, OFFICERS, &c.)

Chief Justice.—Go, carry Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet. Take all his company along with him.

Falstaff.—My lord, my lord:—

Chief Justice.—I cannot now speak; I will hear you soon; Take them away. [*Exeunt* Falstaff, Shallow, &c.

Nor is this ignominious dismissal quite enough. Shakespeare was determined to show that a life of selfishness, dissipation, and sensuality, gratified without compunction for others, without reflection and without stint, is not redeemable (by the highest amount of wit and sagacity in the ways of the world) from the vilest fate to which man can be subjected.

He, who might have been the companion of the wisest and the best,—whose society might have charmed a court—whose wit, a senate;—whose intellect—dwelling upon the beneficence of the Creator, rather than on the paltry

occasions of the hour among dissolute companions—might have been so cultivated, that the approach of death should have given hope of brighter things, instead of despair for things lost—he whose wit in this world never palled, never forsook him :—now, at the gates of another world, inferior in mental stature to the meanest child that humbly lisps the Redeemer's name—he dies in a miserable hole in London, with none but outcasts of the world near him, whose attempts to console him would in themselves, but for the ignorance of the wretched comforters, be an insult to humanity. It was surely in no idle humour, that Shakespeare penned the woful termination of Falstaff's career, where the Eastcheap tavernkeeper (when Falstaff in agony calls upon God again and again) says :—

Mrs. Quickly.—Now I, to comfort him, bid him a' should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet.

Oh! never say but Shakespeare is the truest moralist we have! Granted, that he does not preach to us, in his own person, long-winded sentences, denouncing this or that crime—putting, as some writers do, whole sentences in italics, to catch the eye:—but show the counterpart as a moral satire, to the death of Falstaff; with such a ministering angel as Dame Quickly, and such advice as hers, that the hour of death was no time to think of God.

As to the Second Part of Henry IV., though it contains much about Falstaff, it is not necessary to transcribe more concerning him.

There is a passage couched in serious terms, in which Henry IV. bewails his condition thus:—

How many thousand of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep!—Sleep, gentle sleep,
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,
That thou no more wilt weigh my eye-lids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?

Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber;
Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?
O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile,
In loathsome beds; and leav'st the kingly couch,
A watch-case, or a common 'larum-bell?
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge;
And in the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
With deaf'ning clamours in the slippery clouds,
That, with the hurly, death itself awakes?
Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude:
And, in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a king? Then happy low, lie down!
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

The scene in which Henry IV. on his deathbed was solemnly comforted by his son's assurances has already been quoted.

When the son has become King Henry V., the nobility assemble with heavy hearts in anticipation of impending woes, and two brothers of the King warn the Chief Justice that he "must now speak to Sir John Falstaff fair." The Chief Justice has only had time to justify his conduct when the King comes on the stage in state:—

Chief Justice.—Sweet princes, what I did, I did in honour,
Led by the impartial conduct of my soul;
And never shall you see, that I will beg
A ragged and forestall'd remission.—
If truth and upright innocency fail me,
I'll to the king my master that is dead,
And tell him who hath sent me after him.

Warwick.—Here comes the prince.

Enter KING HENRY V.

Chief Justice.—Good morrow, and heaven save your majesty!
King.—This new and gorgeous garment, majesty,
Sits not so easy on me as you think.—
Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear;
This is the English, not the Turkish court;
Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
But Harry Harry: yet be sad, good brothers,
For, to speak truth, it very well becomes you:
Sorrow so royally in you appears,
That I will deeply put the fashion on,
And wear it in my heart. Why then, be sad:
But entertain no more of it, good brothers,
Than a joint burden laid upon us all.
For me, by heaven, I bid you be assured,
I'll be your father and your brother too;
Let me but bear your love, I'll bear your cares.
Yet weep, that Harry's dead, and so will I;
But Harry lives, that shall convert those tears,
By number, into hours of happiness.
P. John, &c.—We hope no other from your majesty.
King.—You all look strangely on me:—and you most;
[*To the* Chief Justice.
You are, I think, assur'd I love you not.
Chief Justice.—I am assured, if I be measur'd rightly,
Your Majesty hath no just cause to hate me.
King.—No!
How might a prince of my great hopes forget
So great indignities you laid upon me?
What! rate, rebuke, and roughly send to prison
The immediate heir of England! Was this easy?
May this be wash'd in Lethe, and forgotten?
Chief Justice.—I then did use the person of your father;
The image of his power lay then in me:
And, in the administration of his law,
Whiles I was busy for the Commonwealth,
Your highness pleased to forget my place,
The majesty and power of law and justice,
The image of the King whom I presented,
And struck me in my very seat of judgment;
Whereon, as an offender to your father,

I gave bold way to my authority,
And did commit you. If the deed were ill,
Be you contented, wearing now the garland,
To have a son set your decrees at nought;
To pluck down justice from your awful bench;
To trip the course of law, and blunt the sword
That guards the peace and safety of your person:
Nay, more; to spurn at your most royal image,
And mock your workings in a second body.
Question your royal thoughts, make the case yours;
Be now the father, and propose a son:
Hear your own dignity so much profan'd,
See your most dreadful laws so loosely slighted,
Behold yourself so by a son disdained;
And then imagine me taking your part,
And, in your power, soft silencing your son:
After this cold considerance, sentence me;
And, as you are a king, speak in your state,
What I have done, that misbecame my place,
My person, or my liege's sovereignty.

King.—You are right, Justice, and you weigh this well;
Therefore still bear the balance, and the sword:
And I do wish your honours may increase,
Till you do live to see a son of mine
Offend you, and obey you, as I did.
So shall I live to speak my father's words:—
Happy am I, that have a man so bold,
That dares do justice on my proper son;
And not less happy, having such a son,
That would deliver up his greatness so
Into the hands of justice.—You did commit me:
For which, I do commit into your hand
The unstained sword that you have us'd to bear;
With this remembrance,—That you use the same
With the like bold, just, and impartial spirit,
As you have done 'gainst me. There is my hand;
You shall be as a father to my youth;
My voice shall sound as you do prompt mine ear;
And I will stoop and humble my intents
To your well practis'd, wise directions.———
And, princes all, believe me, I beseech you;—
My father is gone wild into his grave,

For in his tomb lie my affections;
And with his spirit sadly I survive,
To mock the expectation of the world;
To frustrate prophecies; and to raze out
Rotten opinion, who hath writ me down
After my seeming. The tide of blood in me
Hath proudly flow'd in vanity, till now:
Now doth it turn, and ebb back to the sea;
Where it shall mingle with the state of floods,
And flow henceforth in formal majesty.
Now call we our high court of parliament:
And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel,
That the great body of our state may go
In equal rank with the best govern'd nation;
That war, or peace, or both at once may be
As things acquainted and familiar to us;———
In which you, father, shall have foremost hand.
[*To the* Lord Chief Justice.
Our coronation done, we will accite,
As I before remember'd, all our state;
And (God consigning to my good intents),
No prince, nor peer, shall have just cause to say,—
Heaven shorten Harry's happy life one day.

Chronologically the play Henry V. must follow the play Henry IV., but in fact it was the last English historical play written by Shakespeare.*

With it he bade farewell to his production of English History on the stage, and he made it a triumphant national epic.

The Prologue, spoken by "Chorus," strikes the keynote to the drama.

O, for a muse of fire that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention!
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,

* Henry VIII. of course was produced at a later date; but as it was announced as a joint work of Shakespeare and Fletcher, it cannot be classed as one of Shakespeare's own productions.

And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars; and, at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire,
Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraised spirits, that have dared,
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object: Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O, the very casques,
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon, since a crooked figure may
Attest, in little place, a million;
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work.
Suppose, within the girdle of these walls
Are now confin'd two mighty monarchies,
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous, narrow ocean parts asunder.
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
Into a thousand parts divide one man,
And make imaginary puissance:
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Print their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth:
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times;
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass; For the which supply,
Admit me Chorus to this history;
Who, prologue-like, your humble patience pray
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

Then the King's counsellors are seen in solemn conclave expressing their wonder at the wisdom he has shown so suddenly; and in the presence chamber a council is held as to Henry's claim to the throne of France, and it is resolved to maintain it.

The French ambassadors are introduced and contemptuously tell Henry that he can win nothing in France "with a nimble galliard," and that the Dauphin has sent him a tun of tennis balls for his amusement in England.

The King dismisses the ambassadors haughtily, and bids them to tell the Dauphin that

His jest will savour but of shallow wit
When thousands weep more than did laugh at it.

One of the courtiers remarks :—"This was a merry message," and the King briefly adds :—

We hope to make the sender blush at it.
Therefore, my lords, omit no happy hour
That may give furtherance to our expedition,
For we have now no thought in us but France,
Save those to God, that run before our business.

The Second Act is preceded by another ode from the Chorus :—

Now all the youth of England are on fire . . .
Following the mirror of all Christian Kings
With winged heels, as English Mercuries,
For now sits expectation in the air, . . .
O! England, model to thy inward greatness,
Like little body with a mighty heart,
What mightst thou do, that honour would thee do,
Were all thy children kind and natural! . . .

The conspirators hired by French gold to assassinate the King at Southampton are thus dismissed openly by the King himself :—

God quit you in His mercy! Hear your sentence.
You have conspired against our royal person,
Join'd with an enemy proclaimed, and from his coffers
Received the golden earnest of our death;
. . . . . .
Touching our person seek we no revenge;
But we our kingdom's safety must so tender,
Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws
We do deliver you. Get you therefore hence,
Poor miserable wretches, to your death;
The taste whereof, God of his mercy give you
Patience to endure, and true repentance
Of all your dear offences. Bear them hence. . . .

The tension on the minds of the audience is here varied by the tavern scene in London describing the death of Falstaff, which has been already quoted in these pages.

Then follows a scene in the French Court, at which the Dauphin laughs to scorn the idea of danger from England.

For, my good liege, she is so idly king'd,
Her sceptre so fantastically borne
By a vain, giddy, shallow, humorous youth,
That fear attends her not.

His scorn is at once rebuked by the Constable of France:—

O peace, Prince Dauphin!
You are too much mistaken in this king;
Question, your grace, the late ambassadors,
With what great state he heard their embassy,
How well supplied with noble counsellors,
How modest in exception, and withal
How terrible in constant resolution,—
And you shall find his vanities forespent
Were but the outside of the Roman Brutus,
Covering discretion with a coat of folly.*

The Third Act shows the king on the battle-field, at Harfleur:

K. Henry.—Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead!
In peace, there's nothing so becomes a man,
As modest stillness, and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage:
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
Let it pry through the portage of the head,
Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it,
As fearfully, as doth a gallèd rock

*This speech is cited in the text to show how Shakespeare artfully accumulates evidence to corroborate Henry V.'s apology for his youthful levities.

O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
Now set the teeth, and stretch the nostril wide;
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height!—On, on, you noblest English,
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof!
Fathers, that like so many Alexanders,
Have, in these parts, from morn till even fought,
And sheath'd their swords for lack of argument.
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest,
That those, whom you called fathers, did beget you!
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war!—And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
That you are worth your breeding: which I doubt not;
For there is none of you so mean and base,
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot;
Follow your spirit: and upon this charge,
Cry—God for Harry! England! and Saint George!
[*Exeunt. Alarum, and chambers go off.*

The Fifth Scene of the Third Act depicts the consternation of the French Court at Henry's progress, and their determination to crush him with overwhelming force. His small army being already decimated by disease, a French Herald demands ransom from him, as he is marching towards Calais.

K. Henry.—Thou dost thy office fairly. Turn thee back,
And tell thy king,—I do not seek him now;
But could be willing to march on to Calais
Without impeachment: for, to say the sooth,
(Though 'tis no wisdom to confess so much
Unto an enemy of craft and vantage,)
My people are with sickness much enfeebled;
My numbers lessen'd; and those few I have,
Almost no better than so many French;
Who when they were in health, I tell thee, herald,
I thought, upon one pair of English legs

Did march three Frenchmen.—Yet, forgive me, God,
That I do brag thus!—this your air of France
Hath blown that vice in me; I must repent.
Go therefore, tell thy master, here I am;
My ransom, is this frail and worthless trunk;
My army, but a weak and sickly guard;
Yet, God before, tell him we will come on,
Though France himself, and such another neighbour
Stand in our way. There's for thy labour, Montjoy.
Go bid thy master well advise himself:
If we may pass, we will; if we be hinder'd,
We shall your tawny ground with your red blood
Discolour: and so, Montjoy, fare you well.
The sum of all our answer is but this:
We would not seek a battle, as we are:
Nor as we are, we say, we will not shun it;
So tell your master.

The next scene presents a jovial company of high officers in the French army at Agincourt, exulting in the prospect of assured victory; the Duke of Orleans closing the conversation thus:—

It is now two o'clock; but, let me see, by ten,
We shall have each a hundred Englishmen.

The Fourth Act is prefaced by a Prologue spoken by the Chorus:—

Chorus.—Now entertain conjecture of a time,
When creeping murmur, and the poring dark,
Fills the wide vessel of the universe.
From camp to camp, through the foul womb of night,
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch:
Fire answers fire: and through their paly flames
Each battle sees the other's umber'd face:
Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs
Piercing the night's dull ear; and from the tents,
The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.

The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll,
And the third hour of drowsy morning name.
Proud of their numbers, and secure in soul,
The confident and over-lusty French
Do the low-rated English play at dice;
And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night,
Who, like a foul and ugly witch, doth limp
So tediously away. The poor condemned English,
Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
Sit patiently, and inly ruminate
The morning's danger; and their gesture sad,
Investing lank-lean cheeks, and war-worn coats,
Presenteth them unto the gazing moon
So many horrid ghosts. O, now, who will behold
The royal captain of this ruin'd band,
Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,
Let him cry—Praise and glory on his head!
For forth he goes, and visits all his host;
Bids them good-morrow, with a modest smile;
And calls them—brothers, friends, and countrymen.
Upon his royal face there is no note
How dread an army hath enrounded him;
Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour
Unto the weary and all-watched night;
But freshly looks, and overbears attaint,
With cheerful semblance, and sweet majesty;
That every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks:
A largess universal, like the sun,
His liberal eye doth give to every one
Thawing cold fear. Then mean, and gentle all,
Behold, as may unworthiness define,
A little touch of Harry in the night;
And so our scene must to the battle fly;
Where, (O for pity!) we shall much disgrace—
With four or five most vile and ragged foils,
Right ill dispos'd in brawl ridiculous,—
The name of Agincourt: Yet, sit and see;
Minding true things, by what their mockeries be.

[*Exit.*

Enter KING HENRY, BEDFORD, *and* GLOSTER.

K. Henry.—Gloster, 'tis true, that we are in great danger;
The greater therefore should our courage be.—

Good morrow, brother Bedford.—God Almighty!
There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out;
For our bad neighbour makes us early stirrers,
Which is both healthful, and good husbandry:
Besides, they are our outward consciences,
And preachers to us all; admonishing
That we should dress us fairly for our end.
Thus may we gather honey from the weed,
And make a moral of the devil himself.

Enter ERPINGHAM.

Good morrow, old sir Thomas Erpingham;
A good soft pillow for that good white head
Were better than a churlish turf of France.
Erpingham.—No so, my liege; this lodging likes me better,
Since I may say—now lie I like a king.

Walking through his camp, disguised in plain dress, the King has an appropriate word in encounters with Pistol, with three soldiers, Bates, Court, and Williams, and Sir T. Erpingham: and it is worthy of notice that, even in that perilous time, Shakespeare preserves for his national hero the love of practical jokes which he had depicted in him in his younger days.

He did not alter Falstaff's selfish character to gratify Queen Elizabeth; and he retains in Henry V. (with regard to Fluellen and the soldier Williams) the humours of the exploit at Gadshill and Eastcheap.

Enter BATES, COURT, *and* WILLIAMS.

Court.—Brother John Bates, is not that the morning which breaks yonder?

Bates.—I think it be: but we have no great cause to desire the approach of day.

Williams.—We see yonder the beginning of the day, but, I think, we shall never see the end of it.—Who goes there?

K. Henry.—A friend.

Williams.—Under what captain serve you?

K. Henry.—Under sir Thomas Erpingham.

Williams.—A good old commander, and a most kind gentleman: I pray you, what thinks he of our estate?

K. Henry.—Even as men wrecked upon a sand, that look to be washed off the next tide.

Bates.—He hath not told his thought to the king?

K. Henry.—No; nor it is not meet he should. For, though I speak it to you, I think, the king is but a man, as I am; the violet smells to him, as it doth to me; the element shows to him, as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions: his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet, when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing; therefore when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are: Yet, in reason, no man should possess him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army.

Bates.—He may show what outward courage he will: but, I believe, as cold a night as 'tis, he could wish himself in the Thames up to the neck, and so I would he were, and I by him, at all adventures, so we were quit here.

K. Henry.—By my troth, I will speak my conscience of the king; I think, he would not wish himself anywhere but where he is.

Bates.—Then, 'would he were here alone; so should he be sure to be ransomed, and a many poor men's lives saved.

K. Henry.—I dare say, you love him not so ill, to wish him here alone, howsoever you speak this, to feel other men's minds: Methinks, I could not die anywhere so contented, as in the king's company; his cause being just and his quarrel honourable.

Williams.—That's more than we know.

Bates.—Ay, or more than we should seek after; for we know enough, if we know we are the king's subjects; if his cause be wrong, our obedience to the king wipes the crime of it out of us.

Williams.—But if the cause be not good, the king himself hath a heavy reckoning to make; when all those legs, and arms, and heads, chopped off in a battle, shall join together at the latter day, and cry all —We died at such a place; some, swearing; some, crying for a surgeon; some, upon their wives left poor behind them; some, upon the debts they owe, some, upon their children rawly left. I am afraid there are few die well, that die in a battle; for how can they charitably dispose of anything, when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the king that led them to it: whom to disobey, were against all proportion of subjection.

K. Henry.—So, if a son, that is by his father sent about merchandise, do sinfully miscarry upon the sea, the imputation of his wicked-

ness, by your rule, should be imposed upon his father that sent him: or if a servant, under his master's command, transporting a sum of money, be assailed by robbers, and die in many irreconciled iniquities, you may call the business of the master the author of the servant's damnation:—But this is not so: the king is not bound to answer the particular endings of his soldiers, the father of his son, nor the master of his servant; for they purpose not their death, when they purpose their services. Besides, there is no king, be his cause never so spotless, if it come to the arbitrament of swords, can try it out with all unspotted soldiers. Some, peradventure, have on them the guilt of premeditated and contrived murder; some, of beguiling virgins with the broken seals of perjury; some, making the wars their bulwark, that have before gored the gentle bosom of peace with pillage and robbery. Now, if these men have defeated the law, and outrun native punishment, though they can outstrip men, they have no wings to fly from God: war is his beadle, war is his vengeance; so that here men are punished, for before-breach of the king's laws, in now the king's quarrel: where they feared the death, they have borne life away; and where they would be safe, they perish: Then if they die unprovided, no more is the king guilty of their damnation, than he was before guilty of those impieties for the which they are now visited. Every subject's duty is the king's; but every subject's soul is his own. Therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed, wash every mote out of his conscience: and dying so, death is to him advantage; or not dying, the time was blessedly lost, wherein such preparation was gained: and, in him that escapes, it were not sin to think, that making God so free an offer, he let him outlive that day to see his greatness, and to teach others how they should prepare.

Williams.—'Tis certain, every man that dies ill, the ill is upon his own head, the king is not to answer for it.

Bates.—I do not desire he should answer for me; and yet I determine to fight lustily for him.

K. Henry.—I myself heard the king say, he would not be ransomed.

Williams.—Ay, he said so, to make us fight cheerfully: but, when our throats are cut, he may be ransomed, and we ne'er the wiser.

K. Henry.—If I live to see it, I will never trust his word after.

Williams.—'Mass, you'll pay him then! That's a perilous shot out of an elder gun, that a poor and private displeasure can do against a monarch! you may as well go about to turn the sun to ice, with fanning in his face with a peacock's feather. You'll never trust his word after! come, 'tis a foolish saying.

K. Henry.—Your reproof is something too round; I should be angry with you, if the time were convenient.

Williams.—Let it be a quarrel between us, if you live.

K. Henry.—I embrace it.

Williams.—How shall I know thee again?

K. Henry.—Give me any gage of thine, and I will wear it in my bonnet: then, if ever thou darest acknowledge it, I will make it my quarrel.

Williams.—Here's my glove; give me another of thine.

K. Henry.—There.

Williams.—This will I also wear in my cap: if ever thou come to me and say, after to-morrow, *This is my glove*, by this hand, I will take thee a box on the ear.

K. Henry.—If ever I live to see it, I will challenge it.

Williams.—Thou darest as well be hanged.

K. Henry.—Well, I will do it, though I take thee in the king's company.

Williams.—Keep thy word: fare thee well.

Bates.—Be friends, you English fools, be friends; we have French quarrels enough, if you could tell how to reckon.

K. Henry.—Indeed, the French may lay twenty French crowns to one, they will beat us; for they bear them on their shoulders: But it is no English treason to cut French crowns; and, to-morrow, the king himself will be a clipper. [*Exeunt* Soldiers.

Upon the king! let us our lives, our souls,
Our debts, our careful wives, our children, and
Our sins, lay on the king. We must bear all.
O hard condition! twin-born with greatness,
Subjected to the breath of every fool,
Whose sense no more can feel but his own wringing!
What infinite heart's ease must kings neglect,
That private men enjoy?
And what have kings, that privates have not too,
Save ceremony, save general ceremony?
And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more
Of mortal griefs, than do thy worshippers?
What are thy rents? what are thy comings-in?
O ceremony, show me but thy worth!
What is thy soul of adoration?
Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form,
Creating awe and fear in other men?
Wherein thou art less happy being fear'd
Than they in fearing,

What drink'st thou oft, instead of homage sweet,
But poisoned flattery? O, be sick, great greatness,
And bid thy ceremony give thee cure!
Think'st thou, the fiery fever will go out
With titles blown from adulation?
Will it give place to flexure and low bending?
Canst thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee,
Command the health of it? No, thou proud dream,
That play'st so subtly with a king's repose;
I am a king, that find thee; and I know,
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The inter-tissued robe of gold and pearl,
The farced title running 'fore the king,
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
That beats upon the high shore of this world,
No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave;
Who, with a body fill'd, and vacant mind,
Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread;
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell;
But, like a lackey, from the rise to set,
Sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and all night
Sleeps in Elysium; next day, after dawn,
Doth rise, and help Hyperion to his horse;
And follows so the ever-running year
With profitable labour, to his grave:
And, but for ceremony, such a wretch,
Winding up days with toil, and night with sleep,
Had the fore-hand and vantage of a king.
The slave, a member of the country's peace,
Enjoys it; but in gross brain little wots
What watch the King keeps to maintain the peace,
Whose hours the peasant best advantages.

Enter ERPINGHAM.

Erpingham.—My lord, your nobles, jealous of your absence,
Seek through your camp to find you.
K. Henry.— Good old knight,
Collect them all together at my tent:
I'll be before thee.
Erpingham.— I shall do't, my lord. [*Exit.*

K. Henry.—O God of battles! steel my soldiers' hearts!
Possess them not with fear; take from them now
The sense of reckoning, if the opposed numbers
Pluck their hearts from them!—Not to-day, O Lord,
O not to-day, think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown!
I Richard's body have interred new;
And on it have bestowed more contrite tears,
Than from it issued forced drops of blood.
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,
Who twice a day their wither'd hands hold up
Toward heaven, to pardon blood; and I have built
Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests
Sing still for Richard's soul. More will I do:
Though all that I can do, is nothing worth;
Since that my penitence comes after all,
Imploring pardon.

Enter GLOSTER.

Gloster.—My liege!
K. Henry.— My brother Gloster's voice?—Ay;
I know thy errand, I will go with thee:—
The day, my friends, and all things stay for me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—THE FRENCH CAMP.

Enter DAUPHIN, ORLEANS, RAMBURES, *and others.*

Enter CONSTABLE.

Dauphin.—Now, my lord Constable!
Constable.—Hark, how our steeds for present service neigh.
Dauphin.—Mount them, and make incision in their hides;
That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,
And dout them with superfluous courage: Ha!
Rambures.—What, will you have them weep our horses' blood?
How shall we then behold their natural tears?

Enter a MESSENGER.

Messenger.—The English are embattled, you French peers.
Constable.—To horse, you gallant princes! straight to horse!
Do but behold yon poor and starved band,
And your fair show shall suck away their souls,
Leaving them but the shales and husks of men.

There is not work enough for all our hands;
Scarce blood enough in all their sickly veins,
To give each naked curtle-axe a stain,
That our French gallants shall to-day draw out,
And sheathe for lack of sport: let us but blow on them,
The vapour of our valour will o'erturn them.
'Tis positive 'gainst all exceptions, lords,
That our superfluous lackeys, and our peasants,—
Who in unnecessary action swarm
About our squares of battle,—were enough
To purge this field of such a hilding foe:
Though we, upon this mountain's basis by,
Took stand for idle speculation.
But that our honours must not. What's to say?
A very little little let us do,
And all is done. Then let the trumpets sound
The tucket-sonance and the note to mount:
For our approach shall so much dare the field,
That England shall couch down in fear, and yield.

Enter GRANDPRE.

Grandprê.—Why do you stay so long, my lords of France?
Yon island carrions, desperate of their bones,
Ill favour'dly become the morning field:
Their ragged curtains poorly are let loose,
And our air shakes them passing scornfully.
Big Mars seems bankrupt in their beggar'd host,
And faintly through a rusty beaver peeps.
Their horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks,
With torch-staves in their hand: and their poor jades
Lob down their heads, dropping the hides and hips,
The gum down-roping from their pale-dead eyes;
And in their pale dull mouths the gimmal bit
Lies foul with chewed grass, still and motionless;
And their executors, the knavish crows,
Fly o'er them, all impatient for their hour.
Description cannot suit itself in words,
To demonstrate the life of such a battle,
In life so lifeless as it shows itself.

Constable.—They have said their prayers, and they stay for death.

Dauphin.—Shall we go send them dinners, and fresh suits,
And give their fasting horses provender,
And after fight with them?

Constable.—I stay but for my guard: on, to the field:
I will the banner from a trumpet take
And use it for my haste. Come, come, away!
The sun is high, and we outwear the day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—THE ENGLISH CAMP.

Enter the English Host: GLOSTER, BEDFORD, EXETER, SALISBURY, *and* WESTMORELAND.

Gloster.—Where is the king?
Bedford.—The king himself is rode to view their battle.
Westmoreland.—Of fighting men they have full threescore thousand.
O that we now had here

Enter King Henry.

But one ten thousand of those men in England,
That do no work to-day!
K. Henry.— What's he, that wishes so?
My cousin Westmoreland?—No, my fair cousin:
If we are marked to die, we are enough
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold;
Nor care I, who doth feed upon my cost;
It yearns me not, if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But, if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour,
As one man more, methinks, would share from me,
For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more:
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he, which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company,
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is call'd—the feast of Crispian:
He, that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd,

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And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He, that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say—to-morrow is saint Crispian:
Then will he strip his sleeve, and show his scars,
And say, these wounds I had on Crispin's day.
Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember, with advantages,
What feats he did that day: Then shall our names,
Familiar in their mouths as household words,—
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,—
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd:
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remember'd:
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he, to-day that sheds his blood with me,
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England, now a-bed,
Shall think themselves accurs'd, they were not here;
And hold their manhoods cheap, while any speaks,
That fought with us upon saint Crispin's day.

Enter SALISBURY.

Salisbury.—My sovereign lord, bestow yourself with speed;
The French are bravely in their battles set,
And will with all expedience charge on us.
K. Henry.—All things are ready, if our minds be so.
Westmoreland.—Perish the man, whose mind is backward now!
K. Henry.—Thou dost not wish more help from England, cousin?
Westmoreland.—God's will, my liege, 'would you and I alone,
Without more help, might fight this battle out:
K. Henry.—Why, now thou hast unwish'd five thousand men;
Which likes me better, than to wish us one—
You know your places: God be with you all!

Tucket. Enter MONTJOY.

Montjoy.—Once more I come to know of thee, king Harry,
If for thy ransome thou wilt now compound,
Before thy most assured overthrow:

For, certainly, thou art so near the gulf,
Thou needs must be englutted. Besides, in mercy,
The Constable desires thee—thou wilt mind
Thy followers of repentance; that their souls
May make a peaceful and a sweet retire
From off these fields, where (wretches) their poor bodies
Must lie and fester.

K. Henry.— Who hath sent thee now?

Montjoy.—The Constable of France.

K. Henry.—I pray thee, bear my former answer back;
Bid them achieve me, and then sell my bones.
Good God! why should they mock poor fellows thus?
The man, that once did sell the lion's skin
While the beast lived, was kill'd with hunting him.
A many of our bodies shall, no doubt,
Find native graves; upon the which, I trust,
Shall witness live in brass of this day's work:
And those that leave their valiant bones in France,
Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
They shall be fam'd; for there the sun shall greet them,
And draw their honours reeking up to heaven;
Leaving their earthly parts to choke your clime,
The smell whereof shall breed a plague in France.
Mark then a bounding valour in our English;
That, being dead, like to the bullet's grazing,
Break out into a second course of mischief,
Killing in relapse of mortality.
Let me speak proudly:—Tell the Constable,
We are but warriors for the working-day:
Our gayness, and our guilt, are all besmirch'd
With rainy marching in the painful field:
There's not a piece of feather in our host,
(Good argument, I hope, we shall not fly,)
And time hath worn us into slovenry:
But, by the mass, our hearts are in the trim:
And my poor soldiers tell me—yet ere night
They'll be in fresher robes, or they will pluck
The gay new coats o'er the French soldiers' heads,
And turn them out of service. If they do this,
(As, if God please, they shall,) my ransom then
Will soon be levied. Herald, save thou thy labour;
Come thou no more for ransome, gentle herald;

They shall have none, I swear, but these my joints:
Which if they have as I will leave 'em to them,
Shall yield them little, tell the Constable.

Montjoy.—I shall, King Harry: And so fare thee well:
Thou never shalt hear herald any more.

K. Henry.—I fear, thou'lt once more come again for ransom.

Enter the DUKE OF YORK.

York.—My lord, most humbly on my knee I beg
The leading of the vaward.

K. Henry.—Take it, brave York.—Now, soldiers, march away:—
And how thou pleasest, God, dispose the day!

[*Exeunt.*

The battle of Agincourt having been briefly described (not without due tribute to the bravery of the Dauphin, Orleans, and Bourbon), the King's love of fun is shown. Seeing the soldier Williams in the crowd, he says—"Call yonder fellow hither," and asks why he wears the glove (which Henry had given him on the previous night) in his cap.

Williams.—An 't please your Majesty, 'tis the gage of one that I should fight withal, if he be alive.

K. Henry.—An Englishman?

Williams.—An 't please your Majesty, a rascal that swaggered with me last night; who if alive, and ever dare to challenge this glove, I have sworn to take him a box o' the ear: or if I can see my glove in his cap, which he swore as a soldier, he would wear, if alive, I will strike it out soundly.

K. Henry.—What think you, Captain Fluellen? is it fit this soldier keep his oath?

Fluellen.—He is a craven and a villain else, an 't please your Majesty, in my conscience.

K. Henry.—It may be his enemy is a gentleman of great sort, quite from the answer of his degree.

Fluellen.—Though he be as goot a gentleman as the tevil is, as Lucifer and Belzebub himself, it is necessary, look your grace, that he keep his vow and his oath: if he be perjured, see you now, his reputation is as arrant a villain, and a Jack-sauce, as ever his plack shoe trod upon Got's ground and his earth, in my conscience, la.

K. Henry.—Then keep thy vow, sirrah, when thou meet'st the fellow.

Williams.—So I will, my liege, as I live.

K. Henry.—Who servest thou under?

Williams.—Under Captain Gower, my liege.

Fluellen.—Gower is a goot captain; and is goot knowledge and literature in the wars.

K. Henry.—Call him hither to me, soldier.

Williams.—I will, my liege. [*Exit.*

K. Henry.—Here, Fluellen; wear thou this favour for me, and stick it in thy cap: When Alençon and myself were down together, I plucked this glove from his helm; if any man challenge this, he is a friend to Alençon and an enemy to our person; if thou encounter any such, apprehend him, an thou dost love me.

Fluellen.—Your grace does me as great honours, as can be desired in the hearts of his subjects: I would fain see the man, that has but two legs, that shall find himself aggriefed at this glove, that is all; but I would fain see it once: an't please Got of his grace, that I might see it.

K. Henry.—Knowest thou Gower?

Fluellen.—He is my dear friend, an't please you.

K. Henry.—Pray thee, go seek him, and bring him to my tent.

Fluellen.—I will fetch him [*Exit.*

K. Henry.—My lord of Warwick, and my brother Gloster,
Follow Fluellen closely at the heels:
The glove, which I have given him for a favour,
May, haply, purchase him a box o' the ear;
It is the soldier's; I, by bargain, should
Wear it myself. Follow, good cousin Warwick:
If that the soldier strike him, (as, I judge
By his blunt bearing, he will keep his word,)
Some sudden mischief may arise of it;
For I do know Fluellen valiant,
And, touch'd with choler, hot as gunpowder,
And quickly will return an injury:
Follow, and see there be no harm between them.—
Go you with me, uncle of Exeter. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.—BEFORE KING HENRY'S PAVILION.

Enter GOWER *and* WILLIAMS.

Williams.—I warrant, it is to knight you, captain.

Enter FLUELLEN.

Fluellen.—Got's will and his pleasure, captain, I peseech you now, come apace to the king: there is more goot towards you, peradventure, than is in your knowledge to dream of.

Williams.—Sir, know you this glove?

Fluellen.—Know the glove? I know, the glove is a glove.

Williams.—I know this; and thus I challenge it. [*Strikes him.*

Fluellen.—'Sblud, an arrant traitor, as any's in the universal 'orld, or in France, or in England.

Gower.—How now, sir? you villain!

Williams.—Do you think I'll be forsworn?

Fluellen.—Stand away, captain Gower; I will give treason his payment into plows, I warrant you.

Williams.—I am no traitor.

Fluellen.—That's a lie in thy throat.—I charge you in his majesty's name, apprehend him; he's a friend of the duke Alençon's.

Enter WARWICK *and* GLOSTER.

Warwick.—How now, how now! what's the matter?

Fluellen.—My lord of Warwick, here is (praised be Got for it!) a most contagious treason come to light, look you, as you shall desire in a summer's day. Here is his majesty.

Enter KING HENRY *and* EXETER.

K. Henry.—How now! what's the matter?

Fluellen.—My liege, here is a villain, and a traitor, that, look your grace, has struck the glove which your majesty is take out of the helmet of Alençon.

Williams.—My liege, this was my glove; here is the fellow of it: and he, that I gave it to in change, promised to wear it in his cap; I promised to strike him, if he did: I met this man with my glove in his cap, and I have been as good as my word.

Fluellen.—Your majesty hear now, (saving your majesty's manhood,) what an arrant, rascally, beggarly, lousy knave it is: I hope, your majesty is pear me testimony, and witness, and avouchments, that this is the glove of Alençon, that your majesty is give me, in your conscience now.

K. Henry.—Give me thy glove, soldier; Look, here is the fellow of it. 'Twas I, indeed, thou promised'st to strike; and thou hast given me most bitter terms.

Fluellen.—An please your majesty, let his neck answer for it, if there is any martial law in the 'orld.

K. Henry.—How canst thou make me satisfaction?

Williams.—All offences, my lord, come from the heart: never came any from mine, that might offend your majesty.

K. Henry.—It was ourself thou didst abuse.

Williams.—Your majesty came not like yourself: you appeared to me but as a common man; witness the night, your garments, your lowliness; and what your highness suffered under that shape, I beseech you, to take it for your own fault, and not mine: for had you been as I took you for, I made no offence; therefore, I beseech your highness, pardon me.

K. Henry.—Here, uncle Exeter, fill this glove with crowns,
And give it to this fellow.—Keep it, fellow;
And wear it for an honour in thy cap,
Till I do challenge it.—Give him the crowns:—
And, captain, you must needs be friends with him.

Fluellen.—By this day and this light, the fellow has mettle enough in his pelly:—Hold, there is twelve pence for you, and I pray you to serve Got, and keep you out of prawls, and prabbles, and quarrels, and dissensions, and, I warrant you, it is the petter for you.

Williams.—I will none of your money.

Enter an English Herald.

K. Henry.—Now, herald; are the dead number'd?

Herald.—Here is the number of the slaughtered French.

[*Delivers a paper.*

K. Henry.—What prisoners of good sort are taken, uncle?

Exeter.—Charles duke of Orleans, nephew to the king;
John duke of Bourbon, and lord Bouciqualt:
Of other lords, and barons, knights, and 'squires,
Full fifteen hundred, besides common men.

K. Henry.—This note doth tell me of ten thousand French,
That in the fields lie slain: of princes, in this number,
And nobles bearing banners, there lie dead
One hundred twenty-six: added to these,
Of knights, esquires, and gallant gentlemen,
Eight thousand and four hundred; of the which,
Five hundred were but yesterday dubb'd knights:
So that, in these ten thousand they have lost,

There are but sixteen hundred mercenaries;
The rest are—princes, barons, lords, knights, 'squires,
And gentlemen of blood and quality.
The names of those their nobles that lie dead,—
Charles De-la-bret, high constable of France;
Jaques of Chatillon, admiral of France;
The master of the cross-bows, lord Rambures;
Great-master of France, the brave sir Guichard Dauphin;
John duke of Alençon; Antony duke of Brabant,
The brother to the duke of Burgundy;
And Edward duke of Bar: of lusty earls,
Grandpré, and Roussi, Fauconberg, and Foix,
Beaumont, and Marle, Vaudemont, and Lestrale.
Here was a royal fellowship of death!—
Where is the number of our English dead?
[Herald *presents another paper.*
Edward the duke of York, the earl of Suffolk,
Sir Richard Ketly, Davy Gam, esquire:
None else of name; and, of all other men,
But five and twenty. O God, thy arm was here,
And not to us, but to thy arm alone,
Ascribe we all.—When, without stratagem,
But in plain shock, and even play of battle,
Was ever known so great and little loss,
On one part and on th' other?—Take it, God,
For it is only thine!

Exeter.— 'Tis wonderful!

K. Henry.—Come, go we in procession to the village:
And be it death proclaimed through our host,
To boast of this, or take that praise from God,
Which is his only.

Fluellen.—Is it not lawful, an please your majesty, to tell how many is killed?

K. Henry.—Yes, captain; but with this acknowledgment,
That God fought for us.

Fluellen.—Yes, my conscience, he did us great goot.

K. Henry.—Do we all holy rites;
Let there be sung *Non nobis*, and *Te Deum.*
The dead with charity enclos'd in clay,
We'll then to Calais; and to England then;
Where ne'er from France arriv'd more happy men. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

Enter CHORUS.

Chorus.—Vouchsafe to those that have not read the story,
That I may prompt them: and of such as have,
I humbly pray them to admit the excuse
Of time, of numbers, and due course of things,
Which cannot in their huge and proper life
Be here presented. Now we bear the king
Toward Calais: grant him there: there seen,
Heave him away upon your winged thoughts,
Athwart the sea: Behold the English beach
Pales in the flood with men, with wives, and boys,
Whose shouts and claps out-voice the deep-mouth'd sea,
Which, like a mighty whiffler 'fore the king,
Seems to prepare his way: so let him land;
And, solemnly, see him set on to London.
So swift a pace hath thought, that even now
You may imagine him upon Blackheath:
Where that his lords desire him, to have borne
His bruised helmet, and his bended sword,
Before him, through the city: he forbids it,
Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride;
Giving full trophy, signal, and ostent,
Quite from himself, to God. But now behold,
In the quick forge and workinghouse of thought,
How London doth pour out her citizens!
The mayor, and all his brethren, in best sort,—
Like to the senators of the antique Rome,
With the plebeians swarming at their heels,—
Go forth, and fetch their conquering Cæsar in.

Little more need be said. Henry returns to conquered France, the daughter of whose King he is espoused to as the "Præclarissimus Henricus Rex Angliæ, et Hæres Franciæ."

The Chorus speaks a brief Epilogue:—

Thus far, with rough and all unable pen
Our bending author hath pursued the story;
In little room confining mighty men,
Mangling by starts the full course of their glory.
Small time, but in that small most greatly lived
This star of England. . . .

The author makes no apology for having devoted so much space to the play of Henry V. The subject was very near to Shakespeare's heart, and the life of Shakespeare can neither be written nor understood without serious consideration of Shakespeare's treatment of Henry's character.

For similar reasons the drama of Richard II. has been copiously quoted, as it forms so marked a contrast to that of Henry V. One exhibits ability without principle; selfishness without recognition of the claims of his countrymen, or of his duty. The other merges all thought for himself in his supreme sense of his duty to his country. Spectators or readers contemplate the inner workings of the hearts of both as their soliloquies reveal them.

Herein we see the marvellous power of Shakespeare's imagination, which was, in Professor Tyndall's eyes, "the most wonderful thing in the world." His imagination enabled him to put into the mouths of his characters, noble or ignoble, rich or poor, the most appropriate thoughts in whatever position they might find themselves.*

As usual, Shakespeare's own words (in one of his early plays) furnish the explanation:—

> The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.
> Such tricks hath strong imagination.

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* An eminent and popular English writer said to the author, "Did it ever occur to you that there is only one writer that always uses the best word for his purpose? It may be objected to on one ground or another, but it is always the best word for the purpose in hand." Without waiting for an answer he added—"Shakespeare: he's the only man."

Shakespeare's first historical play, Henry VI., has already been touched upon in these pages, and need not occupy much space here.

Yet even in that play words are put into the weak king's mouth which will never be forgotten—

> What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!
> Thrice is he armed that has his quarrel just,
> And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
> Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

He could prophesy too, and in the act of prophesying is done to death by Richard III., the special object of Shakespeare's condemnation, whose vigorous drama denouncing him demands some consideration.

Without any Prologue Richard opens the First Act by describing the methods he has adopted to bring about the murder of his brother Clarence.

With studied hypocrisy towards Clarence, and proud insolence to Sir Thomas Brakenbury (the Keeper of the Tower), to whose custody Richard's wiles have caused Clarence to be committed, he pledges his word to Clarence that whatever the necessary action might be, "I will perform it to enfranchise you." No sooner has Clarence been immured in the Tower than Richard soliloquizes—

> Go tread the path that thou shalt ne'er return,
> Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so,
> That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven,
> If heaven will take the present at our hands.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And if I fail not in my deep intent
> Clarence hath not another day to live:
> Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,
> And leave the world for me to bustle in!
> For then I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter.
> What though I killed her husband and her father?
> The readiest way to make the wench amends
> Is to become her husband and her father.
>
> . . . . . .

And thus throughout the tragedy Richard is made to paint his own character in the blackest colours, in all his soliloquies. But he never loses his self-control in company. When the widowed Queen Margaret says to him—

> Stay, dog, for thou shalt hear me.
> If heaven have any grievous plague in store,
> Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee,
> O! let them keep it till thy sins be ripe,
> And then hurl down their indignation
> On thee the troubler of the poor world's peace!
> The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!
> Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest
> And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!
> No sleep close up those deadly eyes of thine
> Unless it be while some tormenting dream
> Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!
> Thou cloish-marked, abortive, rooting hog!
> Thou that wast sealed in thy nativity
> The slave of nature, and the son of hell!

he does not lose his command of his temper, but retorts upon her with his accustomed readiness.

She, however, like an avenging spirit on the stage, will not be silenced by his retorts, and when Buckingham entreats her to ' have done! for shame, if not for charity," she replies:

> Urge neither charity nor shame to me:
> Uncharitably with me have you dealt,
> And shamefully by you my hopes are butchered.
> My charity is outrage, life my shame;
> And in that shame still live my sorrow's rage. . . .
> Live each of you the subjects to his hate,
> And he to yours, and all of you to God's. [*Exit.*

While others shudder at her imprecations, Richard's hypocrisy is unabashed;

> *Richard.*—I cannot blame her; by God's holy mother,
> She hath had too much wrong; and I repent
> The part thereof that I have done to her. . . .

Marry, as for Clarence he is well repaid;
He is franked up to fatting for his pains:
God pardon them that are the cause of it.

Rivers.—A virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,
To pray for them that have done scathe to us.

Richard.—So do I ever: (*Aside*) being well advised:
For had I cursed now, I had cursed myself.

The next scene depicts Clarence in the Tower, where he tells Brakenbury of his dream.

Methought that I had broken from the Tower
And was embark'd to cross to Burgundy;
And, in my company, my brother Gloster:
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk
Upon the hatches; thence we look'd toward England,
And cited up a thousand fearful times,
During the wars of York and Lancaster,
That had befall'n us. As we pac'd along
Upon the giddy footing of the hatches,
Methought, that Gloster stumbled; and, in falling,
Struck me, that thought to stay him, over-board,
Into the tumbling billows of the main.
O Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!
What dreadful noise of water in mine ears!
What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!
Methought, I saw a thousand fearful wrecks;
Ten thousand men, that fishes gnaw'd upon;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea.
Some lay in dead men's skulls; and, in those holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept
(As 'twere in scorn of eyes,) reflecting gems,
Which woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,
And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by.

Brakenbury.—Had you such leisure in the time of de
To gaze upon the secrets of the deep?

Clarence.—Methought, I had; and often did I strive
To yield the ghost: but still the envious flood
Kept in my soul, and would not let it forth
To seek the empty, vast, and wand'ring air;

But smother'd it within my panting bulk,
Which almost burst to belch it in the sea.

Brakenbury.—Awak'd you not with this sore agony?

Clarence.—O, no, my dream was lengthen'd after life;
O, then began the tempest to my soul!
I pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood,
With that grim ferryman which poets write of,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
The first that there did greet my stranger soul,
Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick;
Who cry'd aloud,—*What scourge for perjury*
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?
And so he vanish'd: Then came wand'ring by
A shadow like an angel, with bright hair
Dabbled in blood; and he shriek'd out aloud,—
Clarence is come,—false, fleeting, perjur'd Clarence,—
That stabb'd me in the field by Tewkesbury;—
Seize on him, furies, take him to your torments!—
With that, methought, a legion of foul fiends
Environ'd me, and howled in mine ears
Such hideous cries, that, with the very noise,
I trembling wak'd, and, for a season after,
Could not believe but that I was in hell;
Such terrible impression made my dream.

Brakenbury.—No marvel, lord, though it affrighted you;
I am afraid, methinks, to hear you tell it.

Clarence.—O, Brakenbury, I have done those things,—
Which now give evidence against my soul,—
For Edward's sake; and, see, how he requites me,—
O God! if my deep prayers cannot appease thee,
But thou wilt be aveng'd on my misdeeds,
Yet execute thy wrath on me alone:
O, spare my guiltless wife, and my poor children!—
I pray thee, gentle keeper, stay by me;
My soul is heavy, and I fain would sleep.

Brakenbury.—I will, my lord; God give your grace good rest!—
[Clarence *reposes himself on a chair.*
Sorrow breaks seasons, and reposing hours,
Makes the night morning, and the noon-tide night.
Princes have but their titles for their glories,
An outward honour for an inward toil;
And, for unfelt imagination,

They often feel a world of restless cares:
So that, between their titles, and low name,
There's nothing differs but the outward fame.

Enter the two MURDERERS.

1 *Murderer.*—Ho! who's here?

Brakenbury.—What would'st thou, fellow? and how cam'st thou hither?

1 *Murderer.*—I would speak with Clarence, and I came hither on my legs.

Brakenbury.—Yea, are you so brief?

2 *Murderer.*—O, sir, 'tis better to be brief than tedious:—
Let him see our commission; talk no more.

[*A paper is delivered to* Brakenbury, *who reads it.*

Brakenbury.—I am, in this, commanded to deliver
The noble duke of Clarence to your hands:—
I will not reason what is meant hereby,
Because I will be guiltless of the meaning.
Here are the keys;—there sits the duke asleep:
I'll to the king; and signify to him,
That thus I have resign'd to you my charge.

1 *Murderer.*—Do so, it is a point of wisdom:
Fare you well. [*Exit* Brakenbury.

2 *Murderer.*—What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?

1 *Murderer.*—No; he'll say, 'twas done cowardly, when he wakes.

2 *Murderer.*—When he wakes! why, fool, he shall never wake until the judgment day.

1 *Murderer.*—Why, then he'll say, we stabb'd him sleeping.

2 *Murderer.*—The urging of that word, judgment, hath bred a kind of remorse in me.

1 *Murderer.*—What, art thou afraid?

2 *Murderer.*—Not to kill him, having a warrant for it; but to be damn'd for killing him, from which no warrant can defend me.

1 *Murderer.*—I thought, thou had'st been resolute.

2 *Murderer.*—So I am, to let him live.

1 *Murderer.*—I'll back to the duke of Gloster, and tell him so.

2 *Murderer.*—Nay, I prithee, stay a little: I hope, my holy humour will change; it was wont to hold me but while one would tell twenty.

1 *Murderer.*—How dost thou feel thyself now?

2 *Murderer.*—'Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.

1 *Murderer.*—Remember our reward, when the deed's done.

2 *Murderer.*—Zounds, he dies; I had forgot the reward.

1 *Murderer.*—Where's thy conscience now?

2 *Murderer.*—In the duke of Gloster's purse.

1 *Murderer.*—So, when he opens his purse to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

2 *Murderer.*—'Tis no matter; let it go; there's few, or none, will entertain it.

1 *Murderer.*—What, if it come to thee again?

2 *Murderer.*—I'll not meddle with it, it is a dangerous thing, it makes a man a coward; a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; he cannot swear, but it checks him; he cannot lie with his neighbour's wife, but it detects him: 'Tis a blushing shame-faced spirit, that mutinies in a man's bosom; it fills one full of obstacles: it made me once restore a purse of gold, that by chance I found; it beggars any man that keeps it: it is turned out of all towns and cities for a dangerous thing; and every man, that means to live well, endeavours to trust to himself, and to live without it.

1 *Murderer.*—'Zounds, it is even now at my elbow, persuading me not to kill the duke.

2 *Murderer.*—Take the devil in thy mind, and believe him not: he would insinuate with thee, but to make thee sigh.

1 *Murderer.*—Tut, I am strong-fram'd, he cannot prevail with me, I warrant thee.

2 *Murderer.*—Spoke like a tall fellow, that respects his reputation. Come, shall we to this gear?

1 *Murderer.*—Take him over the costard with the hilts of thy sword, and then throw him into the malmsey-butt, in the next room.

2 *Murderer.*—O excellent device! and make a sop of him.

1 *Murderer.*—Soft! he wakes.

2 *Murderer.*—Strike.

1 *Murderer.*—No, we'll reason with him.

Clarence.—Where art thou, keeper? give me a cup of wine.

1 *Murderer.*—You shall have wine enough, my lord, anon.

Clarence.—In God's name, what art thou?

1 *Murderer.*—A man, as you are.

Clarence.—But not, as I am, royal.

1 *Murderer.*—Nor you, as we are, loyal.

Clarence.—Thy voice is thunder, but thy looks are humble.

1 *Murderer.*—My voice is now the king's, my looks mine own.

Clarence.—How darkly, and how deadly dost thou speak!

Your eyes do menace me: Why look you pale?
Who sent you hither? Wherefore do you come?

Both Murderers.—To, to, to,——
Clarence.—To murder me?
Both Murderers.—Ay, ay.
Clarence.—You scarcely have the hearts to tell me so,
And therefore cannot have the hearts to do it.
Wherein, my friends, have I offended you?
1 *Murderer.*—Offended us you have not, but the king.
Clarence.—I shall be reconcil'd to him again.
2 *Murderer.*—Never, my lord; therefore, prepare to die.
Clarence.—Are you call'd forth from out a world of men,
To slay the innocent? What is my offence?
Where is the evidence that doth accuse me?
What lawful quest have given their verdict up
Unto the frowning judge? or who pronounc'd
The bitter sentence of poor Clarence' death?
Before I be convict by course of law,
To threaten me with death, is most unlawful.
I charge you, as you hope to have redemption,
By Christ's dear blood shed for our grievous sins,
That you depart, and lay no hands on me;
The deed you undertake is damnable.
1 *Murderer.*—What we will do, we do upon command.
2 *Murderer.*—And he, that hath commanded, is the king.
Clarence.—Erroneous vassal! the great King of kings
Hath in the table of his law commanded,
That thou shalt do no murder; wilt thou then
Spurn at his edict, and fulfil a man's?
Take heed; for he holds vengeance in his hand,
To hurl upon their heads that break his law.
2 *Murderer.*—And that same vengeance doth he hurl on thee,
For false forswearing, and for murder too:
Thou didst receive the sacrament to fight
In quarrel of the house of Lancaster,
1 *Murderer.*—And, like a traitor to the name of God,
Didst break that vow; and, with thy treacherous blade,
Unrip'dst the bowels of thy sovereign's son.
2 *Murderer.*—Whom thou wast sworn to cherish and defend.
1 *Murderer.*—How canst thou urge God's dreadful law to us,
When thou hast broke it in so dear degree?
Clarence.—Alas! for whose sake did I that ill deed?
For Edward, for my brother, for his sake:
He sends you not to murder me for this;
For in that sin he is as deep as I.

If God will be avenged for the deed,
O, know you, that he doth it publicly;
Take not the quarrel from his powerful arm;
He needs no indirect nor lawless course,
To cut off those that have offended him.

1 *Murderer.*—Who made thee then a bloody minister,
When gallant-springing, brave Plantagenet,
That princely novice, was struck dead by thee?

Clarence.—My brother's love, the devil, and my rage.

1 *Murderer.*—Thy brother's love, our duty, and thy fault,
Provoke us hither now to slaughter thee.

Clarence.—If you do love my brother, hate not me;
I am his brother, and I love him well.
If you are hir'd for meed, go back again,
And I will send you to my brother Gloster;
Who shall reward you better for my life,
Than Edward will for tidings of my death.

2 *Murderer.*—You are deceiv'd, your brother Gloster hates you.

Clarence.—O, no; he loves me, and he holds me dear:
Go you to him from me.

Both Murderers.— Ay, so we will.

Clarence.—Tell him, when that our princely father York
Bless'd his three sons with his victorious arm,
And charg'd us from his soul to love each other,
He little thought of this divided friendship:
Bid Gloster think on this, and he will weep.

1 *Murderer.*—Ay, mill-stones; as he lessen'd us to weep.

Clarence.—O, do not slander him, for he is kind.

1 *Murderer.*—Right, as snow in harvest.—Come, you deceive yourself:
'Tis he that sends us to destroy you here.

Clarence.—It cannot be; for he bewept my fortune,
And hugg'd me in his arms, and swore, with sobs,
That he would labour my delivery.

1 *Murderer.*—Why, so he doth, when he delivers thee
From this world's thraldom to the joys of heaven.

2 *Murderer.*—Make peace with God, for you must die, my lord.

Clarence.—Hast thou that holy feeling in thy soul,
To counsel me to make my peace with God,
And art thou yet to thy own soul so blind,
That thou wilt war with God, by murdering me?
Ah, sirs, consider, he, that set you on

To do this deed, will hate you for the deed.
2 *Murderer.*—What shall we do?
Clarence.— Relent, and save your souls.
1 *Murderer.*—Relent! 'tis cowardly, and womanish.
Clarence.—Not to relent, is beastly, savage, devilish.
Which of you, if you were a prince's son,
Being pent from liberty, as I am now,—
If two such murderers as yourselves came to you,
Would not entreat for life?—
My friend, I spy some pity in thy looks;
O, if thine eye be not a flatterer,
Come thou on my side, and entreat for me,
As you would beg, were you in my distress.
A begging prince what beggar pities not?
2 *Murderer*—Look behind you, my lord.
1 *Murderer.*—Take that, and that; if all this will not do,
[*Stabs him.*
I'll drown you in the malmsey-butt within.
[*Exit with the body.*
2 *Murderer.*—A bloody deed, and desperately despatch'd!
How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands
Of this most grievous guilty murder done!

Re-enter first MURDERER.

1 *Murderer.*—How now? what mean'st thou, that thou help'st me not?
By heaven, the duke shall know how slack you have been.
2 *Murderer.*—I would he knew, that I had sav'd his brother!
Take thou the fee, and tell him what I say;
For I repent me that the duke is slain. [*Exit.*
1 *Murderer.*—So do not I; go, coward, as thou art.—
Now must I hide his body in some hole,
Till that the duke take order for his burial;
And when I have my meed, I will away;
For this will out, and here I must not stay. [*Exit.*

Commentators have disputed as to the manner of the death of the Princes in the Tower. Shakespeare ascribes it to their uncle Richard, who obtains the Crown, and after various events, too numerous for inclusion in these pages, is confronted by the Earl of Richmond at Bosworth Field, where Shakespeare, as in other plays, avails himself of super-

natural machinery in developing the inner workings of the minds of the creatures whom he puts upon the stage.

In the space between the tents of Richard and Richmond

The GHOST *of* PRINCE EDWARD, *son to* HENRY THE SIXTH *rises.*

Ghost.—Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!
[*To* King Richard.
Think, how thou stabb'st me in my prime of youth
At Tewkesbury; despair therefore, and die!— [*To* Richmond.
Be cheerful, Richmond; for the wronged souls
Of butcher'd princes fight in thy behalf:
King Henry's issue, Richmond, comforts thee.

The GHOST *of* KING HENRY THE SIXTH *rises.*

Ghost.—When I was mortal, my anointed body
[*To* King Richard.
By thee was punched full of deadly holes:
Think on the Tower and me; despair, and die;
Harry the Sixth bids thee despair, and die.—
Virtuous and holy, be thou conqueror! [*To* Richmond.
Harry, that prophesy'd thou should'st be king,
Doth comfort thee in thy sleep; Live, and flourish!

The GHOST *of* CLARENCE *rises.*

Ghost.—Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!
[*To* King Richard.
I, that was wash'd to death with fulsome wine,
Poor Clarence, by thy guile betray'd to death!
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword; despair, and die!—
Thou offspring of the house of Lancaster. [*To* Richmond.
The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee!
Good angels guard thy battle! Live, and flourish!

The GHOSTS *of* RIVERS, GREY, *and* VAUGHAN, *rise.*

Rivers.—Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow,
[*To* King Richard.
Rivers, that died at Pomfret! despair, and die!

Grey.—Think upon Grey, and let thy soul despair!
[*To* King Richard.

Vaughan.—Think upon Vaughan; and, with guilty fear,
Let fall thy lance! despair, and die!— [*To* King Richard.

All.—Awake! and think, our wrongs in Richard's bosom
[*To* Richmond.
Will conquer him;—awake, and win the day!

The GHOST *of* HASTINGS *rises.*

Ghost.—Bloody and guilty, guiltily awake, [*To* King Richard.
And in a bloody battle end thy days!
Think on lord Hastings; and despair, and die!
Quiet untroubled soul, awake, awake! [*To* Richmond.
Arm, fight, and conquer, for fair England's sake!

The GHOSTS *of the two young* PRINCES *rise.*

Ghosts.—Dream on thy cousins smother'd in the Tower,
Let us be lead within thy bosom, Richard,
And weigh thee down to ruin, shame, and death!
Thy nephews' souls bid thee despair, and die.—
Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace, and wake in joy;
Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy!
Live, and beget a happy race of kings!
Edward's unhappy sons do bid thee flourish.

The GHOST *of* QUEEN ANNE *rises.*

Ghost.—Richard, thy wife, that wretched Anne thy wife,
That never slept a quiet hour with thee,
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations:
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword; despair, and die!
Thou, quiet soul, sleep thou a quiet sleep; [*To* Richmond.
Dream of success and happy victory;
Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee.

The GHOST *of* BUCKINGHAM *rises.*

Ghost.—The first was I, that help'd thee to the crown!
[*To* King Richard.
The last was I that felt thy tyranny:
O, in the battle think on Buckingham,
And die in terror of thy guiltiness!
Dream on, dream on, of bloody deeds and death;
Fainting, despair; despairing, yield thy breath!—
I died for hope, ere I could lend thee aid: [*To* Richmond.
But cheer thy heart, and be thou not dismay'd:
God, and good angels, fight on Richmond's side;
And Richard falls in height of all his pride.

The Ghosts *vanish.* King Richard *starts out of his dream.*

K. Richard.—Give me another horse,—bind up my wounds,—
Have mercy, Jesu!—Soft! I did but dream.—
O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!—
The lights burn blue.—It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? myself! there's none else by:
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here?—No;—Yes; I am:
Then fly,—What, from myself? Great reason: Why?
Lest I revenge. What? Myself upon myself?
Alack! I love myself. Wherefore? for any good,
That I myself have done unto myself?
O, no: alas, I rather hate myself,
For hateful deeds committed by myself.
I am a villain: Yet I lie, I am not.
Fool, of thyself speak well:—Fool, do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree,
Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st degree;
All several sins, all us'd in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all,—Guilty! Guilty!
I shall despair.—There is no creature loves me;
And, if I die, no soul will pity me:—
Nay, wherefore should they? since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself.
Methought, the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent: and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.

Enter RATCLIFF.

Ratcliff.—My lord,——
K. Richard.—Who's there?
Ratcliff.—Ratcliff, my lord; 'tis I. The early village cock
Hath twice done salutation to the morn;
Your friends are up, and buckle on their armour.
K. Richard.—O, Ratcliff, I have dream'd a fearful dream!—
What thinkest thou, will our friends prove all true?
Ratcliff.—No doubt, my lord.
K. Richard.— Ratcliff, I fear, I fear,—
Ratcliff.—Nay, good my lord, be not afraid of shadows.
K. Richard.—By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night

Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers
Armed in proof, and led by shallow Richmond.
It is not yet near day. Come, go with me;
Under our tents I'll play the eaves-dropper,
To hear if any mean to shrink from me.

[*Exeunt* King Richard *and* Ratcliff.

Enter NORFOLK.

Norfolk.—This found I on my tent this morning.
[*Giving a scroll.*

K. Richard.—*Jockey of Norfolk, be not too bold,* [*Reads.*
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold.

A thing devised by the enemy.—
Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge:
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls;
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devis'd at first to keep the strong in awe;
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.
March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-mell;
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.—
What shall I say more than I have inferr'd?
Remember whom you are to cope withal;—
A sort of vagabonds, rascals, and run-aways,
A scum of Bretons, and base lackey peasants,
Whom their o'er-cloyèd country vomits forth
To desperate ventures and assur'd destruction.
You sleeping safe, they bring you to unrest;
You having lands, and bless'd with beauteous wives,
They would restrain the one, distain the other.
And who doth lead them, but a paltry fellow,
Long kept in Bretagne at our mother's cost?
A milk-sop, one that never in his life
Felt so much cold as over shoes in snow?
Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again,
Lash hence these over-weening rags of France,
These famish'd beggars, weary of their lives;
Who, but for dreaming on this fond exploit,
For want of means, poor rats, had hang'd themselves:
If we be conquer'd, let men conquer us,
And not these bastard Bretons, whom our fathers
Have in their own land beaten, bobb'd, and thump'd,
And, on record, left them the heirs of shame.

Shall these enjoy our lands? lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters?—Hark, I hear their drum.
[*Drum afar off.*
Fight, gentlemen of England! fight, bold yeomen!
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood;
Amaze the welkin with your broken staves!—

Enter a MESSENGER.

What says Lord Stanley? will be bring his power?
Messenger.—My lord, he doth deny to come.
K. Richard.—Off instantly with his son George's head.
Norfolk.—My lord, the enemy is pass'd the marsh:
After the battle let George Stanley die.
K. Richard.—A thousand hearts are great within my bosom:
Advance our standards, set upon our foes;
Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George.

At the same time the impression made by the Ghosts upon the mind of Richmond is thus described by him to his friends:—

Methought their souls whose bodies Richard murdered
Came to my tent and cried on victory:
I promise you my soul is very jocund
In the remembrance of so fair a dream.

Shakespeare is not unjust, even to his enemies, and gives full credit to Richard's ability and courage, and the traditions of the stage declare that Burbage's delivery of Richard's last speech electrified the audience.

Catesby.—Rescue, my lord of Norfolk, rescue, rescue!
The king enacts more wonders than a man,
Daring an opposite to every danger;
His horse is slain, and all on foot he fights,
Seeking for Richmond in the throat of death:
Rescue, fair lord, or else the day is lost!

Alarum. Enter KING RICHARD.

K. Richard.—A horse! a horse: my kingdom for a horse!
Catesby.—Withdraw, my lord, I'll help you to a horse.
K. Richard.—Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die:
I think, there be six Richmonds in the field;

Five have I slain to-day, instead of him:—
A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

Shakespeare's own ancestor had rendered such service in bringing about the downfall of Richard that he was rewarded by Richmond with lands in Warwickshire, as narrated in the first page of this volume. How true an heir Shakespeare was to the affections of his ancestor, the lurid description of Richard as a fixed figure for "scorn to point his slow unmoving finger at," is proved by the drama of Richard III.

Having briefly analysed a few of the historic plays dealing with England, it is necessary to refer to the general plays, in the order of their production, or nearly so.

The Comedy of Errors, an early play, is a broad farce,* and is recognised as such by those who see it on the stage, and are confused as the actors themselves as to the identity of the Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus and Syracuse.

Midsummer Night's Dream is deemed by some to be the play which followed the Comedy of Errors.

It still holds a place in popular approval, and the drollery of Bottom is applauded now as of yore; while Oberon, Titania, and Puck are known wherever the English language is spoken.

In the same early period The Two Gentlemen of Verona was produced and applauded.

The drollery of the two clowns is still amusing, and Julia's words—

The current that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou knowest, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;
But, when his fair course is not hindered,

* Shakespeare wrote two plays, which may be thus designated: the one mentioned in the text, and the other "The Taming of the Shrew." Those who have been so fortunate as to see them well represented on the stage will agree that the designation is correct.

> He makes sweet music with the enamell'd stones,
> Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
> He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;
> And so by many winding nooks he strays
> With willing sport to the wild ocean—

are as musical to English ears in the twentieth century as they were in the sixteenth.

In Romeo and Juliet, which is assigned to this period of Shakespeare's life, he produced a tragedy in private life which has held possession of the stage in his own country and abroad until the present time.

It cannot be necessary to multiply quotations from it in these pages. But it may be remarked in passing that though Prince Escalus justly pronounces that

> Never was a story of more woe
> Than this of Juliet and her Romeo,

Shakespeare took care to relieve the feelings of his auditory by introducing Mercutio, the Nurse, and a few others. Nevertheless sadness rules in the representation, as it did when Juliet frantically cried out—

> Is there no pity sitting in the clouds
> That sees into the bottom of my grief?

The Merchant of Venice requires mention here chronologically, but need not be expatiated upon, as the play is commented on in the next chapter. No lengthy comment on The Taming of the Shrew is needed, as it is written (and when well acted is received) as a boisterous farce.

The Merry Wives of Windsor has been also alluded to in connection with the accepted tradition that it was written to comply with the desire of Queen Elizabeth.

Much Ado about Nothing belongs to this period. Tragic in some of its incidents, it is relieved to the audience, according to Shakespeare's custom, by the droll ineptitude of Dogberry, who has become a type of a certain

kind of blundering, common enough in nature, but not elsewhere presented so drolly on the English stage. When the play was produced at Stratford-on-Avon at the opening of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre on the 23rd April, 1879, Lady Martin (Helena Faucit) took the part of Beatrice, and in her work on "Shakespeare's Female Characters," she says:—

> It was a deep delight to me to be the first to interpret on that spot one of my great master's brightest creations. Everything conspired to make the occasion happy. From every side of Shakespeare's county, from London, from remote provinces, came people to witness that performance. The characters were well supported, and the fact that we were acting in Shakespeare's birthplace, and to inaugurate his Memorial Theatre, seemed to inspire us all.

The sound of criticism would be harsh while the voice of the Muse is lingering in the air, and nothing more need be said here about the charming Much Ado about Nothing.

Nor is there any necessity to dilate upon the delightful As You Like It.

But the speech with which the banished Duke opens the Second Act in the forest is so happy an example of the manner in which Shakespeare could make musical the words of his characters, that it must be cited.

> Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
> Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
> Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
> More free from peril than the envious court?
> Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
> The seasons' difference; as the icy fang
> And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
> Which, when it bites and blows upon my body
> E'en till I shrink with cold, I smile and say:
> "This is no flattery, these are counsellors,
> That feelingly persuade me what I am."
> Sweet are the uses of adversity,
> Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Wears yet a precious jewel in his head:

And this our life exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

The characters in As You Like It are few in number, but the names of several have become household words—Rosalind, Orlando, Touchstone, Jaques, will live with the English language.

Some writers have complained that Shakespeare is excellent in painting heroines but fails to present heroes. One may well inquire how they would colour their canvas if they were asked to metamorphose Orlando into a hero fulfilling their demands. Perhaps his modesty offends some persons.

Jaques.—Will you sit down with me? and we two will rail against our mistress, the world, and all our misery.

Orlando.—I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults.

It is the function of Jaques to draw forth the wisdom of others :—

Jaques.—It is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects; and, indeed, the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness.

Rosalind.—A traveller! by my faith, you have great reason to be sad: I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's: then to have seen much and to have nothing is to have rich eyes and poor hands.

Jaques.—Yes, I have gained my experience.

Rosalind.—And your experience makes you sad: I had rather have a fool to make me merry, than experience to make me sad; and to travel for it, too!

. . . . . .

Rosalind.—But to Orlando; did he leave him there,
Food to the suck'd and hungry lioness?

Oliver.—Twice did he turn his back and purposed so;
But kindness, nobler ever than revenge,
And nature, stronger than his just occasion,
Made him give battle to the lioness,
Who quickly fell before him. . . .

It is almost superfluous to quote the Duke's conversation about life and its sorrows, yet it may be cited as an example of Shakespeare's power to teach, even in a forest.

Duke Senior.—Thou seest, we are not all alone unhappy:
This wide and universal theatre
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene
Wherein we play in.

Jaques.— All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits, and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;
And then, the whining school-boy, with his satchel,
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school: And then, the lover;
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eye-brow: Then, a soldier:
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth: and then, the justice;
In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances,
And so he plays his part: The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon;
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound: Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion;
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.

Re-enter ORLANDO, *with* ADAM.

Duke Senior.—Welcome: Set down your venerable burden,
And let him feed.

Orlando.— I thank you most for him.

Adam.—So had you need;
I scarce can speak to thank you for myself.

Duke Senior.—Welcome, fall to ; I will not trouble you
As yet, to question you about your fortunes:—
Give us some music; and, good cousin, sing.

AMIENS *sings.*

SONG.

I.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh, ho! sing, heigh, ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh, ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

II.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.
Heigh, ho! sing, heigh, ho! &c.

As to the accusation that Shakespeare's power to depict a hero was not equal to his power to portray a heroine, a word may be said fitly here.

The purpose of the drama, Shakespeare makes one of his most notable characters declare,

was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image; and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve.

The dramatist has to hold the mirror up to nature; and if he believes that woman is more adorable than man, the dramatist must so depict her.

Those who condemn Shakespeare in the matter are railing at nature which he depicted; and upon "the mystery of things" as if they "were God's spies."

Think but for a moment upon the noble catalogue of heroes whom Shakespeare has presented to us! Prospero, Sebastian, Duke Vincentio, the banished Duke, Camillo, Polixenes, Banquo (who, tempted like Macbeth, utters the prayer "Merciful powers, restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature gives way to in repose"), Edgar the son of Gloster, Kent, Hamlet, Henry V. as King, and others.

Moreover, if it be the fact, as Shakespeare appears to have thought, that the deepest human sympathies can be touched by presenting women on the stage, who can blame him for presenting them, and surrounding them with circumstances most fitting for the development of their influence and charms? If the Almighty has made woman more adorable than man, who can blame Shakespeare for so depicting her in his mirror?

There are not many characters in Twelfth Night, but almost all of them have retained a place in the memory. Viola, Maria, Sebastian, Sir Toby Belch, Malvolio, Aguecheek, and Feste the Clown, have left unforgotten sayings.

The Duke opens the play with a hymn to music:—

Duke.—If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O, it came o'er mine ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets
Stealing and giving odour.

. . . . . .

Clown.—Good madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.
Olivia.—Can you do it?
Clown.—Dexterously, good madonna.
Olivia.—Make your proof.

Clown.—I must catechize you for it, madonna; good my mouse of virtue, answer me.

Olivia.—Well, sir, for want of other idleness, I'll bide your proof.

Clown.—Good madonna, why mournest thou?

Olivia.—Good fool, for my brother's death.

Clown.—I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

Olivia.—I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

Clown.—The more fool you, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen.

Olivia.—What think you of this fool, Malvolio? doth he not mend?

Malvolio.—Yes, and shall do till the pangs of death shake him: infirmity, that decays the wise, doth ever make the better fool.

Clown.—God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity for the better increasing your folly! Sir Toby will be sworn that I am no fox; but he will not pass his word for twopence that you are no fool.

Olivia.—How say you to that, Malvolio?

Malvolio.—I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal: I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that hath no more brain than a stone. Look you now, he's out of his guard already; unless you laugh and minister occasion to him he's gagged. I protest, I take these wise men that crow so at these set kind of fools, as no better than the fool's zanies.

Olivia.—O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon-bullets. There is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man though he do nothing but reprove.

The Clown had a good memory, for in the last Act, after practical jokes have been played at Malvolio's expense, he says, "I was one, Sir, in this interlude; one Sir Topas, Sir, but that's all one. 'By the Lord, fool, I am not mad.' But do you remember? 'Madam, why laugh you at such a barren rascal? an' you smile not, he's gagged;' and thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges." Viola is made the exponent of Feste's character in happy terms:—

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool;
And to do that well craves a kind of wit:
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,

The quality of persons, and the time,
And like the haggard, check at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practice
As full of labour as a wise man's art:
For folly that he wisely shows, is fit;
But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit.

A few words may be said here as to the sources from which Shakespeare drew the materials for his plays. He has even been charged with a lack of invention because he moulded them occasionally upon old legends.

But such detraction loses its sting when the circumstances of the time are fairly considered. Shakespeare no doubt was the life and soul of the Company to which he belonged, for which he had done so much, and which had done so much for him. But there were other companies, and the rivalry between them made it a matter of importance to select subjects for plays which might be expected (from the interest they excited in readers of old chronicles) to command attention on the stage. Shakespeare was only using common sense when he took from Boccaccio, from Holinshed, or from any old chronicle, the materials which, so far as popular estimation could be guaged, were likely to prove attractive on the stage.

But he took them in no servile spirit. In the old legend all the daughters of Lear behaved unnaturally to their father. What a transmutation was effected by Shakespeare when he created Cordelia!

Measure for Measure was founded on some of the incidents in an Italian play by Cinthio. In the Italian work the heroine yields to the rascal who persuades her to degrade herself to save her brother's life. Shakespeare's heroine, when shame is proposed to her, replies:

Were I under the terms of death,
The impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death, as to a bed,

That longing I've been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame.
Angelo.— Then must your brother die.
Isabella.—And 'twere the cheaper way:
Better it were a brother died at once
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,
Should die for ever.
Angelo.—Were not you, then, as cruel as the sentence
That you have slandered so?
Isabella.—Ignominy in ransom, and free pardon,
Are of two houses; lawful mercy is
Nothing akin to foul redemption.

It was well that the Duke by his disguise could restore peace and do justice; and this Shakespeare is careful to make plain.

From Measure for Measure a passage which was singled out by Archbishop Trench as worthy of special admiration will be cited in the third chapter of this work; but there are others which may be glanced at here. Isabella is pleading for her brother's life—

Isabella.—I have a brother is condemn'd to die:
I do beseech you, let it be his fault,
And not my brother.
Angelo.—Condemn the fault, and not the actor of it!
Why, every fault's condemn'd, ere it be done:
Mine were the very cipher of a function,
To find the faults, whose fine stands in record,
And let go by the actor.
Isabella.— O just, but severe law!
I had a brother then.—Must he needs die?
Angelo.— Maiden, no remedy.
Isabella.—Yes; I do think that you might pardon him,
And neither heaven, nor man, grieve at the mercy.
Angelo.—I will not do't.
Isabella.— But you can, if you would?
Angelo.—Look, what I will not, that I cannot do.
Isabella.—But might you do't, and do the world no wrong,
If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse
As mine is to him?

Angelo.— He's sentenced; 'tis too late.
Isabella.—Too late? why, no; I, that do speak a word,
May call it back again: Well, believe this,
No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace,
As mercy does. If he had been as you,
And you as he, you would have slipt like him;
But he, like you, would not have been so stern.
Angelo.—Pray you, begone.
Isabella.—I would to heaven I had your potency,
And you were Isabel! should it then be thus?
No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge,
And what a prisoner.
Angelo.—Your brother is a forfeit of the law,
And you but waste your words.
Isabella.— Alas! alas!
Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy: How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.
Angelo.— Be you content, fair maid;
It is the law, not I, condemns your brother:
Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,
It should be thus with him;—he must die to-morrow.
Isabella.—To-morrow? O, that's sudden! Spare him, spare him:
He's not prepared for death! Even for our kitchens
We kill the fowl of season; shall we serve heaven
With less respect than we do minister
To our gross selves? Good, good my lord, bethink you:
Who is it that hath died for this offence?
There's many have committed it.
Angelo.—The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept:
Those many had not dar'd to do that evil,
If the first man that did the edict infringe,
Had answer'd for his deed: now, 'tis awake;
Takes note of what is done; and, like a prophet,
Looks in a glass, that shows what future evils,

(Either now, or by remissness new conceived,
And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,)
Are now to have no successive degrees,
But, where they live, to end.

Isabella.— Yet show some pity.

Angelo.—I show it most of all, when I show justice;
For then I pity those I do not know,
Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall;
And do him right, that, answering one foul wrong,
Lives not to act another. Be satisfied;
Your brother dies to-morrow; be content.

Isabella.—So you must be the first, that gives this sentence;
And he that suffers: O, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant. Could great men thunder
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
For every pelting, petty officer,
Would use his heaven for thunder: nothing but thunder!—
Merciful heaven!
Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak,
Than the soft myrtle;—O, but man, proud man!
Drest in a little brief authority;
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,
His glassy essence,—like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastick tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep; who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.
We cannot weigh our brother with ourself:
Great men may jest with saints: 'tis wit in them;
But, in the less, foul profanation.
That in the captain's but a cholerick word,
Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.

Angelo.—Why do you put these sayings upon me?

Isabella.—Because authority, though it err like others,
Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself,
That skins the vice o' the top: Go to your bosom;
Knock there; and ask your heart, what it doth know
That's like my brother's fault: if it confess
A natural guiltiness, such as his is,
Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
Against my brother's life.

Angelo.— She speaks, and 'tis
Such sense, that my sense breeds with it.—Fare you well.

Isabella.—Gentle my lord, turn back.

Angelo.—I will bethink me:—Come again to-morrow.

Isabella.—Hark, how I'll bribe you: Good my lord, turn back.

Angelo.—How! Bribe me?

Isabella.—Ay, with such gifts, that heaven shall share with you.
Not with fond shekels of the tested gold,
Or stones, whose rates are either rich, or poor,
As fancy values them: but with true prayers,
That shall be up at heaven, and enter there,
Ere sun-rise: prayers from preserved souls,
From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate
To nothing temporal.

Angelo.— Well: come to me
To-morrow.

Isabella.—Heaven keep your honour safe.

Angelo.— Amen: for I
Am that way going to temptation, [*Aside.*
Where prayers cross.

Isabella.— At what hour to-morrow
Shall I attend your lordship?

Angelo.— At any time 'fore noon.

Isabella.—Save your honour!

Angelo.— From thee; even from thy virtue!—
What's this? what's this? Is this her fault, or mine?
The tempter or the tempted, who sins most? Ha!
Not she; nor doth she tempt; but it is I,
That lying by the violet in the sun
Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season . . .
O fie, fie, fie!
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
Dost thou desire her foully for those things
That make her good? O! let her brother live!
Thieves for their robbery have authority,
When judges steal themselves . . . What is't I dream of?
O, cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
With saints doth bait thy hook! Most dangerous
Is that temptation that doth goad us on
To sin in loving virtue.

In yet another scene Shakespeare makes Angelo describe the tumult in his breast:—

A Room in ANGELO'S *House.*

Enter ANGELO.

Angelo.—When I would pray and think, I think and pray
To several subjects: heaven hath my empty words:
Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,
Anchors on Isabel: Heaven in my mouth,
As if I did but only chew his name;
And in my heart, the strong and swelling evil
Of my conception. The state whereon I studied,
Is like a good thing, being often read,
Grown sear'd and tedious; yea, my gravity,
Wherein (let no man hear me) I take pride,
Could I, with boot, change for an idle plume,
Which the air beats for vain. O place! O form!
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming! Blood, thou still art blood:
Let's write good angel on the devil's horn,
'Tis not the devil's crest.

The unjust judge can moralize, but not amend: he asks Isabel what she would do to save her brother's life:—would she do wrong to save him?

Angelo.— What would you do?
Isabella.—As much for my poor brother, as myself:
That is, were I under the terms of death,
The impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death, as to a bed
That longing I have been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame.
Angelo.— Then must your brother die.
Isabella.—And 'twere the cheaper way:
Better it were, a brother died at once,
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,
Should die for ever.
Angelo.—Were not you then as cruel as the sentence
That you have slandered so?

Isabella.—Ignominy in ransom, and free pardon,
Are of two houses; lawful mercy is
Nothing akin to foul redemption.
Angelo.—You seem'd of late to make the law a tyrant;
And rather prov'd the sliding of your brother
A merriment than a vice.
Isabella.—O, pardon me, my lord; it oft falls out,
To have what we would have, we speak not what we mean:
I something do excuse the thing I hate,
For his advantage that I dearly love.
Angelo.—We are all frail.
Isabella.— Else let my brother die,
If not a feodary, but only he,
Owe, and succeed by weakness.
Angelo.— Nay, women are frail too.
Isabella.—Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves;
Which are as easy broke as they make forms.
Women!—Help heaven! men their creation mar
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times frail;
For we are soft as our complexions are,
And credulous to false prints.

The unjust deputy is unabashed, and is denounced by the brave Isabel, who goes to the prison to see her doomed brother; where Duke Vincentio, in disguise as a friar, becomes acquainted with Isabel's narrative to her brother, and the incapacity of the brother to comprehend the awful issues of the corrupt Angelo's offers. What a contrast Shakespeare shows between the sensual view of Claudio and the moral principles of Isabella:—

Claudio.— O Isabel!
Isabella.—What says my brother?
Claudio.— Death is a fearful thing.
Isabella.—And shamed life a hateful.
Claudio.—Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;

To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those, that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling!—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

Isabella.—Alas! Alas!

Claudio.— Sweet sister, let me live:
What sin you do to save a brother's life,
Nature dispenses with the deed so far,
That it becomes a virtue.

Claudio.— O, you beast!
O, faithless coward! O, dishonest wretch!
Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?
Is't not a kind of incest, to take life
From thine own sister's shame? What should I think?

No further citations need be made from Measure for Measure, which ends prosperously in the betrothal of Isabella to the Duke, after public exposure of the wrong-doings which the Duke had looked upon in disguise.

The great mind-searching tragedy, Hamlet, was produced at a period which demands notice at this point; but to analyze it here, and discuss the arguments about it, would swell this volume to inconvenient size.

About the popularity of the play there never was any doubt.

At Oxford and Cambridge it was paid the compliment (till then, it has been said, unknown) of being presented at both Universities.

In London, Shakespeare's lifelong friend, Burbage, acted as Hamlet, and assisted in creating admiration which three centuries have not extinguished. It is pleasant to think of the mutual congratulations of author and actor when the triumph was obtained.

With what zest must Burbage have delivered Hamlet's advice to the players :—

Enter HAMLET *and certain* PLAYERS.

Hamlet.—Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus: but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings; who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Tergamant; it out-herods Herod; pray you, avoid it.

1 *Player.*—I warrant your honour.

Hamlet.—Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance that you o'er-step not the modesty of nature; for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure. Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one, must, in your allowance, o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play,—and heard others praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1 *Player.*—I hope, we have reformed that indifferently with us, Sir.

Hamlet.—O, reform it altogether. And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the meantime, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous; and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

Though it is not convenient to encumber these pages with arguments about the condition of Hamlet's mind, it is

fitting, if not absolutely needful, to let Hamlet's own words portray his state of mind.

We are introduced to him in the second scene of the First Act, when the murderous usurper Claudius thus addresses him :—

King.—But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,——
Hamlet.—A little more than kin, and less than kind. [*Aside.*
King.—How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
Hamlet.—Not so, my lord, I am too much i' the sun.
Queen.—Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not, for ever, with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st, 'tis common; all, that live, must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.
Hamlet.—Ay, madam, it is common.
Queen.— If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?
Hamlet.—Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not "seems."
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly: These, indeed, seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within, which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.
King.—'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost his; and the survivor bound
In filial obligation, for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: But to persevere
In obstinate condolement, is a course
Of impious stubbornness: 'tis unmanly grief:
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven;
A heart unfortified, or mind impatient:
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what we know must be, and is as common

As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
Take it to heart? Fye! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd; whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe; and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And, with no less nobility of love,
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire:
And, we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen.—Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet;
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

Hamlet.—I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King.—Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come.

Hamlet is left alone and soliloquizes thus:—

Hamlet.—O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fye on't! O fye! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not two;
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown

By what it fed on: and yet, within a month,—
Let me not think on't;—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears;—why she, even she,—
O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer,—married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father,
Than I to Hercules: within a month;
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married:—O most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to, good;
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, *and* MARCELLUS.

Horatio.—Hail to your lordship!

Hamlet.— I am glad to see you well:
Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

Horatio.—The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Hamlet.—Sir, my good friend, I'll change that name with you.
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—Marcellus?

Marcellus.—My good lord,——

Hamlet.—I am very glad to see you; good even, sir,—
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Horatio.—A truant disposition, good my lord.

Hamlet.—I would not hear your enemy say so;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know, you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep, ere you depart.

Horatio.—My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Hamlet.—I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think, it was to see my mother's wedding.

Horatio.—Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Hamlet.—Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
'Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father,—Methinks, I see my father.

Horatio.— O where, my lord?
Hamlet.—In my mind's eye, Horatio.
Horatio.—I saw him once, he was a goodly king.
Hamlet.—He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.
Horatio.—My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
Hamlet.—Saw! who?
Horatio.—My lord, the king your father.
Hamlet.— The king my father!

Horatio describes the appearance of the ghost, and Hamlet determines to watch that night!

If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it though hell itelf should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. . . .
My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: 'would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

. . . . . .

While Hamlet is watching at night,

Enter GHOST.

Horatio.— Look, my lord, it comes!
Hamlet.—Angels and ministers of grace defend us!—
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:
Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell,
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again? What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,
So horribly to shake our disposition,

With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?
[*Ghost beckons* Hamlet.

Horatio.—It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

Marcellus.— Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground:
But do not go with it.

Horatio.— No, by no means.

Hamlet.—It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Horatio.—Do not, my lord.

Hamlet.— Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again;—I'll follow it.

Horatio.—What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er his base into the sea?
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? think of it:
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain,
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears it roar beneath.

Hamlet.—It waves me still. Go on, I'll follow thee.

Marcellus.—You shall not go, my lord.

Hamlet.—Hold off your hands.

Horatio.—Be ruled; you shall not go.

Hamlet.—My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I called: unhand me, gentlemen:
By heaven I'll make a ghost of him that lets me.
I say, away! Go on, I'll follow thee.

The Ghost tells Hamlet that

The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Hamlet.— O my prophetic soul!
My uncle! . . .

After the Ghost has left him, Hamlet exclaims:

O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell?—O fye!—Hold, hold, my heart,
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up!—Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
My tables,—meet it is, I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark: [*Writing.*
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;
It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*
I have sworn't.

Hamlet rejoins his friends and swears them to secrecy, thus:—

Hamlet.—Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Swear by my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard.
Ghost [*beneath*].—Swear by his sword.
Hamlet.—Well said, old mole! can'st work i' the earth so fast?
A worthy pioneer!—Once more remove, good friends.
Horatio.—O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!
Hamlet.—And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
But come;——
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy!

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on—
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall
With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As, *Well, well, we know;*—or, *We could, an if we would;*
—or, *If we list to speak;*—or, *There be, an if they might;*
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me:—This do you swear,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you!

Ghost [*beneath*].—Swear.

Hamlet.—Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you:
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do, to express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint;—O cursed spite!
That ever I was born to set it right.
Nay, come, let's go together. [*Exeunt.*

It is from the mouth of Ophelia that we learn one of the effects which were produced in Hamlet's mind by the natural, unnatural, supernatural circumstances of his position.

Enter OPHELIA.

Polonius.—Farewell!—How now, Ophelia? what's the matter?

Ophelia.—O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Polonius.—What with, in the name of heaven?

Ophelia.—My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

Polonius.—Mad for thy love?

Ophelia.— My lord, I do not know;
But, truly, I do fear it.

Polonius.— What said he?

Ophelia.—He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
And end his being: That done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their helps,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.
Polonius.—Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love;
Whose violent property fordoes itself,
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven,
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry,—
What, have you given him any hard words of late?
Ophelia.—No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters, and denied
His access to me.
Polonius.— That hath made him mad.
I am sorry, that with better heed, and judgment,
I had not quoted him: I fear'd, he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!
It seems, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king;
This must be known; which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.
Come. [*Exeunt.*

The crafty Claudius puts spies upon Hamlet—two of his student friends at Wittenberg—who are to pluck out the heart of his mystery. He suspects them and asks:

Hamlet,—But in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

Rosencrantz.—To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Hamlet.—Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a half-penny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guildenstern.—What should we say, my lord?

Hamlet.—Why any thing—but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know, the good king and queen have sent for you.

Rosencrantz.—To what end, my lord?

Hamlet.—That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Rosencrantz.—What say you? [*To* Guildenstern.

Hamlet.—Nay, then I have an eye of you; [*Aside.*
If you love me, hold not off.

Guildenstern.—My lord, we were sent for.

Hamlet.—I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late, (but, wherefore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me, nor woman neither; though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

The play is arranged for, and Hamlet alone on the stage, thus reasons about himself:

Now I am alone.
O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working, all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion,
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear, with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant; and amaze, indeed,
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property, and most dear life,
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i'the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha!
Why, I should take it: for it cannot be,
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave;
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fye upon't! foh! About my brains! Humph! I have heard,
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father,
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick; if he do blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen,
May be a devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape: yea, and, perhaps,
Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
(As he is very potent with such spirits,)
Abuses me to damn me; I'll have grounds
More relative than this: The play's the thing,
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

His tortured mind has been driven to doubt the reality of the scene on the ramparts when he pledged himself to wipe from his memory all other records, and study to avenge his father. He tells Horatio—

There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death:
I prithee when thou seest that act a-foot
E'en with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note,
And I mine eyes will rivet to his face.

The King's confusion confirms Hamlet's trust in the word of the ghost; and Hamlet, about to have an interview with his mother, sees the king in the act of prayer; for even villains attempt the hypocrisy of prayer.

King.—O! my offence is rank, it smells to heaven:
It hath the primal eldest curse upon it,
A brother's murder!—Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,

I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,—
To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can: What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
O limed soul; that struggling to be free,
Art more engaged! Help, angels, make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe;
All may be well! [*Retires, and kneels.*

Enter HAMLET.

Hamlet.—Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do't;—and so he goes to heaven:
And so am I reveng'd? That would be scann'd:
A villain kills my father; and, for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To Heaven.
Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread;
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?

But, in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him: and am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No.
Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:
When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing; or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't:
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven:
And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit.*

The KING *rises and advances.*

King.—My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—ANOTHER ROOM IN THE SAME.

Enter QUEEN *and* POLONIUS.

Polonius.—He will come straight. Look, you lay home to him:
Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear with:
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.
Pray you, be round with him.
Queen.— I'll warrant you;
Fear me not:—withdraw, I hear him coming.
[Polonius *hides himself.*

Enter HAMLET.

Hamlet.—Now, mother; what's the matter?
Queen.—Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
Hamlet.—Mother, you have my father much offended.
Queen.—Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.
Hamlet.—Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.
Queen.—Why, how now, Hamlet?
Hamlet.— What's the matter now?
Queen.—Have you forgot me?
Hamlet.— No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife:
And,—'would it were not so!—you are my mother.

Queen.—Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.
Hamlet.—Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
You go not, till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.
Queen.—What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!
Polonius [*behind.*]—What ho! help! help! help!
Hamlet.— How now! a rat? [*Draws.*
Dead, for a ducat, dead.
[Hamlet *makes a pass through the arras.*
Polonius [*behind.*]—O, I am slain. [*Falls and dies.*
Queen.—O me, what hast thou done?
Hamlet.— Nay, I know not:
Is it the king?
[*Lifts up the arras, and draws forth* Polonius.
Queen.—O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!
Hamlet.—A bloody deed;—almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.
Queen.—As kill a king!
Hamlet.— Ay, lady, 'twas my word.—
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
[*To* Polonius.
I took thee for thy better*; take thy fortune:
Thou find'st, to be too busy, is some danger.
Leave wringing of your hands: Peace, sit you down,
And let me wring your heart: for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.
Queen.—What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?
Hamlet.— Such an act,
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul; and sweet religion makes

---

* By this glancing word we learn that Hamlet who, a few minutes before had abstained from killing Claudius, now in presence of his mother sought to kill him before her eyes.

A rhapsody of words; Heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen.— Ah me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

Hamlet.—Look here, upon this picture, and on this;
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury,
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination, and a form, indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband.—Look you now, what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love: for at your age,
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
Else, could you not have motion: But sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
But it reserved some quantity of choice
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame, where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

Queen.— O Hamlet, speak no more:
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct. . . .

Enter GHOST.

Hamlet.—Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?
Queen.—Alas! he's mad!
Hamlet.—Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
Ghost.—Do not forget: this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose:
But look, amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul . . .
Speak to her, Hamlet.
Hamlet.— How is it with you, lady?
Queen.—Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hairs, like life in excrements,
Start up and stand on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?
Hamlet.—On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoined, preaching to stones
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me,
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects: then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood.
Queen.—To whom do you speak this?
Hamlet.— Do you see nothing there?
Queen.—Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.
Hamlet.—Nor did you nothing hear?
Queen.—No, nothing but ourselves.
Hamlet.—Why, look you there! look how it steals away,
My father! in his habit as he lived!
Look, where he goes, e'en now, out at the portal! [*Exit* GHOST.
Queen.—This is the very coinage of your brain:

This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.
Hamlet.—Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness
That I have uttered . . . Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
While rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to Heaven;
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,
And do not spread the compost on the weeds
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,
For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg;
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

When Hamlet, after killing Polonius, said "I took thee for thy better," he foreshadowed what that "better" would say, for Claudius, when the Queen tells him of Polonius' death, cries out—

It had been so with us had we been there.

Hamlet is speedily sent away to England, to be murdered there. Before sailing he sees a troop of soldiers, and thus moralizes:—

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good, and market of his time,
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before, and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,—
A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And, ever, three parts coward,—I do not know
Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do;*

Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me:
Witness, this army of such mass, and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince;
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event;
Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,
Is, not to stir without great argument;
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason, and my blood,
And let all sleep, while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That, for a fantasy, and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough, and continent,
To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Lady Martin (who acted Ophelia) wrote—"I cannot think that Hamlet comes out well in his relations with Ophelia;"—but she says that "Hamlet was involved in the meshes of a ruthless destiny, from which by nature and temperament he is powerless to extricate himself." Lady Martin does not state whether Hamlet's mind became warped like Ophelia's by the strain imposed upon it; but of late there has been much discussion in print upon the question.

In these pages there is no need to enter upon it. It will be sufficient to quote Hamlet's own words, pronounced before the King and Queen and the nobility of Denmark, when Hamlet takes the hand of Laertes, and says—

Give me your pardon, sir: I have done you wrong;
But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,

How I am punish'd with a sore distraction.
What I have done,
That might your nature, honour, and exception,
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never. Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it then? His madness: If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

The answer of Laertes, who is using a poisoned weapon while he vaunts about "terms of honour," is skilfully thrown in by Shakespeare to increase our pity for Hamlet, who tells Horatio "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all; since no man of ought of what he leaves, knows what is't to leave betimes." After which he takes the hand of Laertes, and asks his pardon in the lines just quoted, to which the ignoble Laertes replies—

I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour,
I stand aloof; and will no reconcilement,
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungor'd; But till that time,
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

Hamlet.— I embrace it freely;
And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
Give us the foils; come on.

Little more need be said here. The universal venom, in the bowl and on the foil, did its work. King, Queen, Laertes, and Hamlet pass away, leaving a record in the page of Shakespeare, as yet undying.

The publication of North's translation of "Plutarch's Lives," of which a second edition was issued in 1595, seemed to indicate that in the ancient world the dramatist might find worthy and popular topics for the English stage; and Shakespeare's position in the dramatic world, and in social circles, enabled him to choose his own themes.

He selected the period of the assassination of Julius Cæsar, but he made Brutus the protagonist of the play; while Cassius, Mark Antony, Portia and others contribute intense interest in its development.

Objections have been made with regard to the presentment of Cæsar, on the ground that the greatness of his character is obscured, and he is represented almost in a state of dotage, although the play was named after him. But Shakespeare was comparatively indifferent about the titles of his plays. Cymbeline is in no sense the hero of the play named after him. Twelfth Night, or What You Will, and As You Like It, show absolute indifference as to any rule that a play should be named after its principal character.

Moreover, at the time of the opening of the play, Cæsar had shown symptoms of a warping of his character. Suetonius gives us numerous instances. His claim to wear always a laurel crown, to have his statue placed with the statues of kings, his "simulacra juxta Deos," his anger against Marullus and Flavius, with other symptoms of swelling pride, are duly chronicled by Suetonius. They were the subjects of common talk in Rome at the date chosen for the commencement of the drama, and might fitly be introduced as indications of a lapse on Cæsar's part from the almost

more than mortal sagacity, activity, and courage with which he had won his way to what was equivalent to supreme power, but was not saluted under the coveted name of king. "Tribunos (Marullus and Flavius) graviter increpatus potestate privavit," Suetonius wrote. Shakespeare makes Casca tell us in the First Act—"Marullus and Flavius, for pulling scarfs off Cæsar's images, are put to silence."

The foregoing remarks, though obviously fair to Shakespeare, are by no means intended to imply that the poet's imagination has no right to present pictures, or treat as facts, things not attested in the page of history. In such a case the poet's occupation would be gone.

Antony made no speech to the Roman crowd around Cæsar's body where it fell, but Shakespeare was justified in creating the position and framing the subtle speech which stirred the passions of the people.*

It may be mentioned, in passing, that though the Cæsar of the play lacks some of the lightning-like promptitude of the younger man, and is epileptic moreover, Shakespeare reveals some flashes of the historic man.

Cæsar.—What can be avoided,
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?
Yet Cæsar shall go forth; for these predictions
Are to the world in general as to Cæsar. . . .
Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;

* Professor Lounsbury, in his "Shakespeare and Voltaire" (page 109), in commenting on this speech, points out "the subtle insinuation which suggests what it does not say, the appeals which inflame the passions they pretend to calm, the thousand delicate touches defying analysis which make the speech of Antony the most effective of oratorical masterpieces."

Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

Shakespeare does indeed put arrogant words into Cæsar's mouth, but he lets him die with dignity.

We learn from Suetonius that, on the evening before his assassination, Cæsar, at the house of Lepidus, on the question "quisnam esset finis vitæ commodissimus, repentinum, inopinatumque prætulerat," and his behaviour when assaulted by a large band of conspirators, including Brutus, was undisturbed by passion or by fear:—(*Cæsar*) "Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Cæsar!":—the well-beloved Brutus being one of Cæsar's friends.

So much is it necessary to record of Shakespeare's picture of Cæsar; but it is on the characters of Brutus, Portia, Cassius, and Antony that Shakespeare expended the play of his imagination. Look at the scene in which Cassius appears in the character of a tempter (Act I. Scene 2):—

Cassius.—Brutus, I do observe you now of late:
I have not from your eyes that gentleness,
And show of love, as I was wont to have:
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over your friend that loves you.
Brutus.— Cassius,
Be not deceiv'd: If I have veil'd my look,
I turn the trouble of my countenance
Merely upon myself. Vexed I am,
Of late, with passions of some difference,
Conceptions only proper to myself,
Which give some soil, perhaps, to my behaviours:
But let not therefore my good friends be griev'd;
(Among which number, Cassius, be you one;)
Nor construe any further my neglect,
Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,
Forgets the shows of love to other men.
Cassius.—Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion;
By means whereof, this breast of mine hath buried

Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?
Brutus.—No, Cassius: for the eye sees not itself,
But by reflection, by some other things.
Cassius.—'Tis just:
And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
That you have no such mirror, as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
That you might see your shadow. I have heard,
Where many of the best respect in Rome,
(Except immortal Cæsar,) speaking of Brutus,
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes.
Brutus.—Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
That you would have me seek into myself
For that which is not in me?
Cassius.—Therefore, good Brutus, be prepar'd to hear:
And, since you know you cannot see yourself
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,
Will modestly discover to yourself
That of yourself which you yet know not of.
And be not jealous of me, gentle Brutus:
Were I a common laugher, or did use
To stale with ordinary oaths my love
To every new protester; if you know
That I do fawn on men, and hug them hard,
And after scandal them; or if you know
That I profess myself in banqueting
To all the rout, then hold me dangerous.
[*Flourish and shout.*
Brutus.—What means this shouting? I do fear, the people
Choose Cæsar for their king.
Cassius.— Ay, do you fear it?
Then must I think you would not have it so.
Brutus.—I would not, Cassius; yet I love him well:—
But wherefore do you hold me here so long?
What is it that you would impart to me?
If it be aught toward the general good,
Set honour in one eye, and death i' the other,
And I will look on both indifferently:
For, let the gods so speed me, as I love
The name of honour more than I fear death.

Cassius.—I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
As well as I do know your outward favour.
Well, honour is the subject of my story.—
I cannot tell, what you and other men
Think of this life; but, for my single self,
I had as lief not be, as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Cæsar; so were you:
We both have fed as well; and we can both
Endure the winter's cold, as well as he. . . .
Ye gods! it doth amaze me
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world
And bear the palm alone. [*Shouting.*
Brutus.—Another general shout!
I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honours that are heaped on Cæsar.
Cassius.—Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates;
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
Brutus, and Cæsar! What should be in that Cæsar?
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?
Write them together, yours is as fair a name;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;
Weigh them, it is as heavy: conjure with them,
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar.
Now in the names of all the gods at once
Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
When went there by an age, since the great flood
But it was famed with more than with one man?
When could they say till now that talked of Rome,
That her wide walls encompassed but one man?
Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,
When there is in it but one only man.
O! you and I have heard our fathers say,
There was a Brutus once that would have brooked

The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king.

Brutus.—That you do love me I am nothing jealous;
What you would work me to I have some aim:
How I have thought of this and of these times
I shall recount hereafter; for this present,
I would not, so with love I might entreat you,
Be any further moved. What you have said,
I will consider; what you have to say,
I will with patience hear, and find a time
Both meet to hear and answer such high things.
Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this:
Brutus had rather be a villager
Than to repute himself a son of Rome
Under these hard conditions as this time
Is like to lay upon us.

Cassius.— I am glad that my weak words
Have struck but thus much show of fire from Brutus.

Cæsar here enters with his train and evinces a truer conception of Cassius' character than Brutus had shown: he says to Antony—

Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights;
Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

Antony.—Fear him not, Cæsar, he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman, and well given.

Cæsar.—'Would he were fatter:—But I fear him not:
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music:
Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
That could be mov'd to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves;
And therefore are they very dangerous.

I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd,
Than what I fear, for always I am Cæsar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

Cassius, at the end of the scene, is alone on the stage, and we learn from his own mouth the nature of his morality:—

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see,
Thy honourable metal may be wrought
From that it is disposed: Therefore 'tis meet
That noble minds keep ever with their likes:
For who so firm, that cannot be seduc'd?
Cæsar doth bear me hard: but he loves Brutus:
If I were Brutus now, and he were Cassius,
He should not humour me. I will this night,
In several hands, in at his windows throw,
As if they came from several citizens,
Writings, all tending to the great opinion
That Rome holds of his name; wherein obscurely
Cæsar's ambition shall be glanced at:
And, after this, let Cæsar seat him sure;
For we will shake him, or worse days endure. [*Exit.*

How truly Cassius had gauged the susceptibility of Brutus we soon learn from the mouth of Brutus himself (Act II., Scene 1):—

Brutus.—It must be by his death: and, for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crown'd:—
How that might change his nature, there's the question.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
And that craves wary walking. Crown him?—That;—
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.
The abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins
Remorse from power: And, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof,
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber upward turns his face,

But when he once obtains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend: So Cæsar may;
Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel
Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented,
Would run to these, and these extremities:
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg,
Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous;
And kill him in the shell.

Finding then one of Cassius' anonymous leaflets urging him to "speak, strike, redress"—his "metal is wrought," as Cassius had predicted, and he exclaims—

O Rome, I make thee promise,
If the redress will follow, thou receivest
Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus!

He preaches to his fellow-conspirators an apology for murder—

Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.
We all stand up against the spirit of Cæsar,
And in the spirit of men there is no blood:
O, that we then could come by Cæsar's spirit,
And not dismember Cæsar! But, alas!
Cæsar must bleed for it! And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcase fit for hounds:
And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,
Stir up their servants to an act of rage
And after seem to chide them. This shall make
Our purpose necessary, and not envious:
Which so appearing to the common eyes,
We shall be called purgers, not murderers.

Shakespeare's Brutus is presented to us, however, in less repulsive colours than as an apologist for murder. In the Second Act we find that when Cassius and other conspirators had left Brutus at his house, Portia appears.

Enter PORTIA.

Portia.— Brutus, my lord!
Brutus.—Portia, what mean you? Wherefore rise you now?
It is not for your health, thus to commit
Your weak condition to the raw-cold morning.
Portia.—Nor for yours neither. You have ungently, Brutus,
Stole from my bed: And yesternight, at supper,
You suddenly arose and walk'd about,
Musing, and sighing, with your arms across:
And when I ask'd you what the matter was,
You star'd upon me with ungentle looks:
I urg'd you further; then you scratch'd your head,
And too impatiently stamp'd with your foot:
Yet I insisted, yet you answer'd not;
But, with an angry wafture of your hand,
Gave sign for me to leave you: So I did;
Fearing to strengthen that impatience,
Which seem'd too much enkindled; and, withal,
Hoping it was but an effect of humour,
Which sometime hath his hour with every man.
It will not let you eat, nor talk, nor sleep;
And, could it work so much upon your shape,
As it hath much prevail'd on your condition,
I should not know you, Brutus. Dear my lord,
Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.
Brutus.—I am not well in health, and that is all.
Portia.—Brutus is wise, and, were he not in health,
He would embrace the means to come by it.
Brutus.—Why, so I do:—Good Portia, go to bed.
Portia.—Is Brutus sick? and is it physical
To walk unbracèd, and suck up the humours
Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick?
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed,
To dare the vile contagion of the night?
And tempt the rheumy and unpurged air
To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus;
You have some sick offence within your mind,
Which, by the right and virtue of my place,
I ought to know of: and, upon my knees,
I charm you, by my once commended beauty,
By all your vows of love, and that great vow
Which did incorporate and make us one,

That you unfold to me, yourself, your half,
Why you are heavy; and what men to-night
Have had resort to you: for here have been
Some six or seven, who did hide their faces
Even from darkness.

Brutus.— Kneel not, gentle Portia.

Portia.—I should not need, if you were gentle Brutus.
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it expected, I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I yourself,
But, as it were, in sort, or limitation;
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

Brutus.—You are my true and honourable wife;
As dear to me, as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart.

Portia.—If this were true, then should I know this secret.
I grant, I am a woman; but, withal,
A woman that lord Brutus took to wife:
I grant, I am a woman; but, withal,
A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter.
Think you, I am no stronger than my sex,
Being so father'd, and so husbanded?
Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose them:
I have made strong proof of my constancy,
Giving myself a voluntary wound
Here, in the thigh: Can I bear that with patience,
And not my husband's secrets?

Brutus.— O ye gods,
Render me worthy of this noble wife! [*Knocking within.*
Hark, hark! one knocks: Portia, go in a while;
And by and by thy bosom shall partake
The secrets of my heart.
All my engagements I will construe to thee,
All the charactery of my sad brows:—
Leave me with haste. [*Exit* Portia.

When Cæsar—with the words "Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Cæsar!"—fell at the base of the statue of Pompey, van-

quished by "ingratitude more strong than traitors' arms," it was the intention of the conspirators to confiscate his goods, to throw his body into the Tiber, and to rescind his legislation. But they feared opposition from the Consul, Antony, and from Lepidus, the Master of the Horse, and three menials carried home their master's body.

Shakespeare's genius presented a more thrilling picture on the London stage.

After a striking colloquy with the conspirators, Antony obtains permission from Brutus (Cassius dissenting) to "speak to the people, as becomes a friend," in the Forum. Brutus undertakes the task of "showing the reason of our Cæsar's death."

THE FORUM.

Enter BRUTUS *and* CASSIUS *and a throng of* CITIZENS.

Citizens.—We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.

Brutus.—Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.—
Cassius, go you into the other street,
And part the numbers.—
Those that will hear me speak, let them stay here;
Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;
And public reasons shall be rendered
Of Cæsar's death.

1 *Citizen.*— I will hear Brutus speak.

2 *Citizen.*—I will hear Cassius; and compare their reasons,
When severally we hear them rendered.

[*Exit* Cassius, *with some of the* Citizens.

BRUTUS *goes into the Rostrum.*

3 *Citizen.*—The noble Brutus is ascended: Silence!

Brutus.—Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause; and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour; and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom; and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Cæsar was no less than his. If then that friend demand, why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer.—

Not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves; than that Cæsar were dead, to live all free men? As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him: There is tears, for his love; joy, for his fortune; honour, for his valour; and death, for his ambition. Who is here so base, that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude, that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile, that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

Citizens.—None, Brutus, none. [*Several speaking at once.*

Brutus.—Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Cæsar, than you should do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy; nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death.

Enter ANTONY *and others, with* CÆSAR'S *body.*

Here comes his body, mourn'd by Mark Antony: who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not? With this I depart; That, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

Citizens.—Live, Brutus, live! live!

1 *Citizen.*—Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

2 *Citizen.*—Give him a statue with his ancestors.

3 *Citizen.*—Let him be Cæsar.

4 *Citizen.*— Cæsar's better parts
Shall now be crown'd in Brutus.

1 *Citizen.*—We'll bring him to his house with shouts and clamours.

Brutus.—My countrymen,—

2 *Citizen.*— Peace; silence! Brutus speaks.

1 *Citizen.*—Peace, ho!

Brutus.—Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony:
Do grace to Cæsar's corpse, and grace his speech
Tending to Cæsar's glories; which Mark Antony,
By our permission, is allow'd to make.
I do entreat you, not a man depart,
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke. [*Exit.*

1 *Citizen.*—Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.

3 *Citizen.*—Let him go up into the public chair;

We'll hear him: Noble Antony, go up.
Antony.—For Brutus' sake, I am beholden to you.
4 *Citizen.*—What does he say of Brutus?
3 *Citizen.*— He says, for Brutus' sake,
He finds himself beholden to us all.
4 *Citizen.*—'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.
1 *Citizen.*—This Cæsar was a tyrant.
3 *Citizen.*— Nay, that's certain:
We are bless'd, that Rome is rid of him.
2 *Citizen.*—Peace; let us hear what Antony can say.
Antony.—You gentle Romans,——
Citizens.— Peace, ho! let us hear him.
Antony.—Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
The evil, that men do, lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you, Cæsar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault;
And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus, and the rest,
(For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men;)
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says, he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says, he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see, that on the Lupercal,
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says, he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause;

What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?
O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason!—Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

1 *Citizen.*—Methinks, there is much reason in his sayings.

2 *Citizen.*—If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Cæsar has had great wrong.

3 *Citizen.*— Has he, masters?
I fear, there will a worse come in his place.

4 *Citizen.*—Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown:
Therefore, 'tis certain, he was not ambitious.

1 *Citizen.*—If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

2 *Citizen.*—Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

3 *Citizen.*—There's not a nobler man in Rome, than Antony.

4 *Citizen.*—Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

Antony.—But yesterday, the word of Cæsar might
Have stood against the world: now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence.
O masters! if I were dispos'd to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honourable men:
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself, and you,
Than I will wrong such honourable men.
But here's a parchment, with the seal of Cæsar,
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will:
Let but the commons hear this testament,
(Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read,)
And they would go and kiss dead Cæsar's wounds,
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood;
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it, as a rich legacy,
Unto their issue.

4 *Citizen.*—We'll hear the will; read it, Mark Antony.

Citizens.—The will, the will; we will hear Cæsar's will.

Antony.—Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;
It is not meet you know how Cæsar lov'd you.
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;
And, being men, hearing the will of Cæsar,

It will inflame you, it will make you mad:
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;
For if you should, O, what would come of it!
4 *Citizen.*—Read the will; we will hear it, Antony;
You shall read us the will; Cæsar's will.
Antony.—Will you be patient? Will you stay a while?
I have o'ershot myself, to tell you of it.
I fear I wrong the honourable men,
Whose daggers have stabb'd Cæsar: I do fear it.
4 *Citizen.*—They were traitors: honourable men!
Citizens.—The will! the testament!
2 *Citizen.*—They were villains, murderers: the will! read the will!
Antony.—You will compel me then to read the will?
Then make a ring about the corpse of Cæsar,
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?
Citizens.—Come down.
2 *Citizen.*—Descend. [*He comes down from the pulpit.*
3 *Citizen.*—You shall have leave.
4 *Citizen.*—A ring; stand round.
1 *Citizen.*—Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.
2 *Citizen.*—Room for Antony;—most noble Antony.
Antony.—Nay, press not so upon me: stand far off.
Citizens.—Stand back! room! bear back!
Antony.—If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle: I remember
The first time ever Cæsar put it on;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent;
That day he overcame the Nervii:—
Look! in this place, ran Cassius' dagger through:
See, what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this, the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
And, as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Cæsar follow'd it;
As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel:
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar lov'd him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all:
For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart,

And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statua,
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.
O, now you weep; and, I perceive, you feel
The dint of pity: these are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what weep you, when you but behold
Our Cæsar's vesture wounded? Look you here,
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

1 *Citizen.*—O piteous spectacle!

2 *Citizen.*—O noble Cæsar!

3 *Citizen.*—O woful day!

4 *Citizen.*—O traitors, villains!

1 *Citizen.*—O most bloody sight!

2 *Citizen.*—We will be revenged: *All.*—Revenge; about,—seek,—burn,—fire,—slay!—let not a traitor live.

Antony.—Stay, countrymen.

1 *Citizen.*—Peace there:—Hear the noble Antony.

2 *Citizen.*—We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

Antony.—Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.
They, that have done this deed, are honourable;
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
That made them do it; they are wise and honourable,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.
I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts;
I am no orator, as Brutus is:
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man
That love my friend; and that they know full well,
That gave me public leave to speak of him:
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;
Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor, poor dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me; but were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
In every wound of Cæsar, that should move
The stones of Rome to rise in mutiny.

Citizens.—We'll mutiny.
1 *Citizen.*—We'll burn the house of Brutus.
3 *Citizen.*—Away, then! come, seek the conspirators.
Antony.—Yet hear me, countyrmen; yet hear me speak.
Citizens.—Peace, ho! Hear Antony. Most noble Antony!
Antony.—Why, friends, you go to do you know not what:
Wherein hath Cæsar thus deserved your loves?
Alas! you know not: I must tell you then:
You have forgot the will I told you of.
Citizens.—Most true: the will! Let's stay and hear the will.
Antony.—Here is the will, and under Cæsar's seal.
To every Roman citizen he gives
To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.
2 *Citizen.*—Most noble Cæsar! we'll revenge his death.
3 *Citizen.*—O royal Cæsar!
Antony.—Hear me with patience.
Citizens.—Peace, ho!
Antony.—Moreover he hath left you all his walks
His private arbours, and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you
And to your heirs for ever: common pleasures,
To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.
Here was a Cæsar! When comes such another?
1 *Citizen.*—Never, never. Come, away, away!
We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
Take up the body.
2 *Citizen.*—Go, fetch fire.
3 *Citizen.*—Pluck down benches.
4 *Citizen.*—Pluck down forms, windows, anything.
[*Exeunt with the body.*
Antony.—Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt!

In the intestine war which ensues, the different dispositions of Brutus and Cassius furnish occasion for the display of Shakespeare's discrimination.

Brutus.— A word, Lucilius;
How he receiv'd you, let me be resolv'd.
Lucilius.—With courtesy, and with respect enough;
But not with such familiar instances,

Nor with such free and friendly conference,
As he hath used of old.

Brutus.— Thou hast describ'd
A hot friend cooling: Ever note, Lucilius,
When love begins to sicken and decay,
It useth an enforcèd ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith:
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle:
But when they should endure the bloody spur,
They fall their crests, and, like deceitful jades,
Sink in the trial. . . . . [*March within.*
Hark, he is arriv'd.

Enter CASSIUS, *&c.*

. . . . . .

Cassius.—Most noble brother, you have done me wrong.

Brutus.—Judge me, you gods! Wrong I mine enemies?
And, if not so, how should I wrong a brother?

Cassius.—Brutus, this sober form of yours hides wrongs,
And when you do them——

Brutus.— Cassius, be content,
Speak your griefs softly,—I do know you well:—
Before the eyes of both our armies here,
Which should perceive nothing but love from us,
Let us not wrangle: Bid them move away;
Then in my tent, Cassius, enlarge your griefs,
And I will give you audience.

. . . . . .

Cassius.—That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this:
You have condemn'd and noted Lucius Pella,
For taking bribes here of the Sardians;
Wherein my letters, praying on his side,
Because I knew the man, were slighted off.

Brutus.—You wrong'd yourself, to write in such a case.

Cassius.—In such a time as this, it is not meet
That every nice offence should bear his comment.

Brutus.—Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself
Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm;
To sell and mart your offices for gold,
To undeservers.

Cassius.— I an itching palm?

You know, that you are Brutus that speak this,
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last.
Brutus.—The name of Cassius honours this corruption,
And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.
Cassius.—Chastisement!
Brutus.—Remember March, the ides of March remember!
Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake?
What villain touch'd his body, that did stab,
And not for justice? What, shall one of us,
That struck the foremost man of all this world,
But for supporting robbers; shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes?
And sell the mighty space of our large honours,
For so much trash, as may be grasped thus?—
I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon,
Than such a Roman.
Cassius.— Brutus, bay not me,
I'll not endure it: you forget yourself,
To hedge me in; I am a soldier, I.
Older in practice, abler than yourself
To make conditions.
Brutus.— Go to; you are not, Cassius.
Cassius.—I am.
Brutus.—I say, you are not.
Cassius.—Urge me no more, I shall forget myself;
Have mind upon your health, tempt me no further.
Brutus.—Away, slight man!
Cassius.—Is't possible?
Brutus.— Hear me, for I will speak.
Must I give way and room to your rash choler?
Shall I be frighted, when a madman stares?
Cassius.—O ye gods! ye gods! Must I endure all this?
Brutus.—All this? ay, more: Fret, till your proud heart break;
Go, show your slaves how choleric you are,
And make your bondmen tremble. Must I budge?
Must I observe you? Must I stand and crouch
Under your testy humour? By the gods,
You shall digest the venom of your spleen,
Though it do split you: for, from this day forth,
I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
When you are waspish.
Cassius.— Is it come to this?
Brutus.—You say, you are a better soldier:

Let it appear so; make your vaunting true,
And it shall please me well: For mine own part,
I shall be glad to learn of noble men.

Cassius.—You wrong me every way; you wrong me, Brutus;
I said, an elder soldier, not a better:
Did I say, better?

Brutus.— If you did, I care not.

Cassius.—When Cæsar liv'd, he durst not thus have mov'd me.

Brutus.—Peace, peace; you durst not so have tempted him.

Cassius.—I durst not?

Brutus.—No.

Cassius.—What? durst not tempt him?

Brutus.— For your life you durst not.

Cassius.—Do not presume too much upon my love,
I may do that I shall be sorry for.

Brutus.—You have done that you should be sorry for.
There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats;
For I am arm'd so strong in honesty,
That they pass by me as the idle wind,
Which I respect not. I did send to you
For certain sums of gold, which you denied me;—
For I can raise no money by vile means:
By heaven, I had rather coin my heart,
And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring
From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash,
By any indirection. I did send
To you for gold to pay my legions,
Which you denied me: was that done like Cassius?
Should I have answered Caius Cassius so?
When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous,
To lock such rascal counters from his friends,
Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts,
Dash him to pieces!

Cassius.— I denied you not.

Brutus.—You did.

Cassius.— I did not: he was but a fool
That brought my answer back. Brutus hath rived my heart:
A friend should bear a friend's infirmities,
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

Brutus.—I do not, till you practise them on me.

Cassius.—You love me not.

Brutus.— I do not like your faults.

Cassius.—A friendly eye could never see such faults.

Brutus.—A flatterer's would not, though they do appear
As huge as high Olympus.
Cassius.—Come Antony, and young Octavius, come,
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,
For Cassius is aweary of the world;
Hated by one he loves; braved by his brother;
Checked like a bondman; all his faults observed,
Set in a note-book, learned and conned by rote,
To cast into my teeth. O I could weep
My spirit from mine eyes! There is my dagger,
And here my naked breast, within, a heart
Dearer than Plutus' mine, richer than gold:
If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth;
I that denied thee gold, will give my heart:
Strike, as thou didst at Cæsar; for I know
When thou didst hate him worst, thou lovedst him better
Than ever thou lovedst Cassius.
Brutus.— Sheathe your dagger:
Be angry when you will, it shall have scope;
Do what you will, dishonour shall be humour.
O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb,
That carries anger as the flint bears fire,
Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again.
Cassius.— Hath Cassius lived
To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus,
When grief and blood ill-tempered vexeth him?
Brutus.—When I spoke that I was ill-tempered too.
Cassius.—Do you confess so much? Give me your hand.
Brutus.—And my heart too.
Cassius.— O Brutus!
Brutus.— What's the matter?
Cassius.—Have you not love enough to bear with me,
When that rash humour which my mother gave me
Makes me forgetful?
Brutus.— Yes, Cassius, and from henceforth,
When you are over-earnest with your Brutus,
He'll think your mother chides, and leave you so.

. . . . . .

Cassius.—I did not think you could have been so angry.
Brutus.—O, Cassius, I am sick of many griefs.
Cassius.—Of your philosophy you make no use,
If you give place to accidental evils.

Brutus.—No man bears sorrow better: Portia is dead!
Cassius.—Ha, Portia?
Brutus.— She is dead.
Cassius.—How 'scaped I killing when I crossed you so?
O, insupportable and touching loss!
Upon what sickness?
Brutus.—Impatient of my absence,
And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony
Have made themselves so strong: for with her death
That tidings came: with this she fell distract,
And, her attendants absent, swallowed fire.
Cassius.—And died so?
Brutus.— Even so.

After further touches, which show the kindliness of Brutus to his page, he tries to read.

Enter the GHOST *of* CÆSAR.

Brutus.— Ha! who comes here?
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me.—Art thou anything?
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
That mak'st my blood cold, and my hair to stare?
Speak to me what thou art.
Ghost.— Thy evil spirit, Brutus.
Brutus.—Why comest thou?
Ghost.—To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.
Brutus.—Well; then I shall see thee again?
Ghost.—Ay, at Philippi.
Brutus.—Why, I will see thee at Philippi then. [*Ghost vanishes.*
Now I have taken heart, thou vanishest.
Ill spirit, I would have more talk with thee.

On the battle-field of Philippi, both Brutus and Cassius destroy themselves by running on the swords with which they had stabbed Cæsar. The moral of the tale is thus summed up by Suetonius—

Percussorum autem fere neque triennio quisquam amplius supervixit, neque sua morte defunctus est. Damnati omnes, alius alio casu periit, pars naufragio, pars prœlio; nonnulli semet eodem illo pugione, quo Cæsarem violaverant, interemerunt.

Shakespeare's play might, therefore, fitly be named Julius Cæsar.

The rapidity with which Shakespeare produced his great creations after the close of the sixteenth century is not more wonderful in itself than creditable to his moral strength of purpose and performance.

A favourite at Court (so far as the customs of the time made it possible that he could be*), the associate of eminent noblemen, and of men of genius, wealthy enough to have become the proprietor of the principal mansion in his native town, and to pay periodical visits to it, while still retaining his house in London;—none could have blamed him if he had somewhat lightened the strain upon his faculties, and indulged in comparative rest.

But the catalogue of his works tells a different tale.

Henry V. is assigned to the year	1599
Much Ado about Nothing is assigned to the year	1599-1600
As You Like It ... ,, ,, ...	1600
Twelfth Night ... ,, ,, ...	1601
All's Well that Ends Well ,, ,, ...	1601-2
Hamlet ... ... ,, ,, ...	1602-3
Measure for Measure ... ,, ,, ...	1603
Julius Cæsar ... ... ,, ,, ...	1601-3
Othello ... ... ,, ,, ...	1600
Macbeth ... ... ,, ,, ..	1605-6
King Lear ... ... ,, ,, ...	1605-6
Troilus and Cressida ... ,, ,, ...	1606-7
Antony and Cleopatra ... ,, ,, ...	1606-7
Coriolanus ... ... ,, ,, ...	1607-8
Timon of Athens ... ,, ,, ...	1607-8
Pericles ... ... ,, ,, ...	1608
Cymbeline ... ... ,, ,, ...	1610
Winter's Tale ... ... ,, ,, ...	1611
The Tempest ... ... ,, ,, ...	1611

* For example, Ben Jonson, in his Poem to the memory of his "beloved the author William Shakespeare," speaks of

. . . "those flights upon the banks of Thames,
That so did take Eliza and our James."

What was the spur to such activity and performance? Let one of his own creations say:

> . . . What is a man
> If his chief good and market of his time
> Be but to sleep and feed?—a beast, no more.
> Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and God-like reason
> To fust in us unused.

Shakespeare strenuously put his faculties to use, and if his countrymen be worthy of him, theirs will be the profit.

Othello is in some respects one of the most painful of Shakespeare's works. The miseries and the tragical fate of the leading characters, who enlist our sympathies, are brought about in so wanton and fiendlike a manner by the mean devices of the miscreant Iago, that anger and disgust possess us: and when Othello, after murdering his wife, speaks of himself as

> One that loved not wisely, but too well;
> Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought
> Perplexed in the extreme—

it is difficult at the moment to imagine in what strange manner Othello could by any method of self-deception persuade himself that he was "one not easily jealous."

But Shakespeare introduces us to Othello not as to a wise man, but as to a mere soldier, one who by deeds of valour had gained distinction in the trained bands of Venice, but had a corner in his heart which flattered him with the thought that his "life and being" were drawn from "men of royal siege."

From childhood (he tells the assembled senate) his limbs had "used their dearest action in the tented field;" and when the villain Iago had poisoned his mind against

Desdemona, it is the loss of warlike excitement and triumph that vexes his soul and inspires his moans :—

> O now for ever
> Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
> Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars
> That make ambition virtue! O farewell!
> Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
> The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing pipe,
> The royal banner, and all quality,
> Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
> And, O you mortal engines whose rude throats
> The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
> Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

It is this votary of war, who, often invited to the house of the senator Brabantio, won the admiration and love of Desdemona, whose praise has been eloquently sung by Lady Theodore Martin in her work on "Shakespeare's Female Characters."

Lady Martin thinks "Iago but a poor trickster at the best," but crimes lead culprits into many illogical positions, and in despair they resort to more crimes, flattering themselves (with Macbeth) that "things bad begun make strong themselves by ill."*

The soliloquies of Iago describe him so graphically, that it may be well to refer to some of them.

After persuading Cassio to adopt a course (of which

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* Shakespeare does not dispose of Iago in the drama, but as he makes Lodovico (Desdemona's kinsman) promise that

> If there be any cunning cruelty
> That can torment him much and hold him long,
> It shall be his,

and as it was in Shakespeare's lifetime that Beatrice Cenci was tortured to death, Papâ adjutante, there can be little doubt about Iago's fate.

Iago hopes to make such use as will ruin others), Iago soliloquizes thus—

> And what's he, then, that says I play the villain?
> When this advice I give is free and honest,
> Probal to thinking. . . . How am I then a villain,
> To counsel Cassio to this parallel course
> Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
> When devils will the blackest sins put on,
> They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
> As I do now; for while this honest fool . . .
> I'll pour this pestilence into his ear . . .
> So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
> And out of her own goodness make the net
> That shall enmesh them all.

He was proud of his own duplicity:

> (Following) the Moor I follow but myself;
> Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
> But seeming so, for my peculiar end:
> For when my outward action doth demonstrate
> The native act and figure of my heart
> In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
> But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
> For daws to peck at. I am not what I am.

When Othello, moved by Iago's artifices, asks for his "thoughts," the villain pretends that

> It were not for your quiet, nor your good,
> Nor for my manhood, honesty or wisdom,
> To let you know my thoughts.
> *Othello.*— What dost thou mean?
> *Iago.*—Good name in man or woman, dear my lord,
> Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
> Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
> 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
> But he that filches from me my good name,
> Robs me of that which not enriches him,
> And makes me poor indeed.
> *Othello.*—By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.
> *Iago.*—You cannot, if my heart were in your hand,
> Nor shall not whilst 'tis in my custody.
> *Othello.*—Ha!

Iago.—O! beware, my lord, of jealousy:
It is the green-ey'd monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on: That cuckold lives in bliss,
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves!
Othello.—O misery!
Iago.—Poor, and content, is rich, and rich enough;
But riches, fineless, is as poor as winter,
To him that ever fears he shall be poor:—
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!
Othello.— Why! why is this?
Think'st thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt,
Is once to be resolv'd: Exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous,
To say—my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me: No, Iago;
I'll see, before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love, or jealousy.
Iago.—I am glad of this; for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,
Receive it from me:—I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;
Wear your eye—thus, not jealous, nor secure:
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty, be abus'd; look to't:
I know our country disposition well;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is—not to leave undone, but keep unknown.
Othello.—Dost thou say so?

Iago.—She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And, when she seem'd to shake, and fear your looks,
She lov'd them most.
Othello.— And so she did.
Iago.— Why, go to, then;
She that so young, could give out such a seeming,
To seal her father's eyes up, close as oak,
He thought, 'twas witchcraft:—But I am much to blame;
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon,
For too much loving you.
Othello.— I am bound to thee for ever.
Iago.—I see, this hath a little dash'd your spirits.
Othello.—Not a jot, not a jot.
Iago.— I' faith, I fear it has.
I hope, you will consider, what is spoke
Comes from my love:—But, I do see you are mov'd:
I am to pray you, not to strain my speech
To grosser issues, nor to larger reach,
Than to suspicion.
Othello.—I will not.
Iago.— Should you do so, my lord,
My speech should fall into such vile success
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend:—
My lord, I see you are mov'd.
Othello.— No, not much moved:—
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.
Iago.—Long live she so! and long live you to think so!
Othello.—And yet, how nature erring from itself,—
Iago.—Ay, there's the point:—as,—to be bold with you,—
Not to affect many proposed matches,
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree;
Whereto, we see, in all things nature tends:
Foh! one may smell, in such, a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.—
But, pardon me; I do not in position,
Distinctly speak of her: though I may fear
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And (happily) repent.
Othello.— Farewell, farewell:
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;
Set on thy wife to observe: leave me, Iago.

Iago.—My lord, I take my leave. [*Going.*
Othello.—Why did I marry?—This honest creature, doubtless,
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.
Iago (returning).—My lord, I would, I might entreat your honour
To scan this thing no further; leave it to time:
And though it be fit that Cassio have his place,
(For, sure, he fills it up with great ability,)
Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,
You shall by that perceive him and his means:
Note, if your lady strain his entertainment
With any strong or vehement importunity;
Much will be seen in that. In the meantime
Let me be thought too busy in my fears,
(As worthy cause I have, to fear I am,)
And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.
Othello.—Fear not my government.
Iago.—I once more take my leave. [*Exit.*
Othello.—This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealings: If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black;
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have: Or, for I am declin'd
Into the vale of years;—yet that's not much;—
She's gone; I am abus'd; and my relief
Must be—to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love,
For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones;
Prerogativ'd are they less than the base:
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death;
Even then this forked plague is fated to us,
When we do quicken.

Iago's sneer at Desdemona for choosing a lover who was not of her "complexion or degree," was not made before he had goaded the Moor to frenzy, and thought it safe to venture on such a theme.

Othello accepts the suggestion when he exclaims—

> Haply, for I am black!

Shakespeare himself was too large-minded to represent complexion as a virtue. In another play he makes his Prince of Morocco speak proudly of it as

> The shadowed livery of the burnished sun;—

but in the case of Othello many taunts are made against his visage. Roderigo exclaims—

> What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe
> When he can carry it thus!

Brabantio tells Othello that only enchantment could have made Desdemona

> Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
> Of such a thing as thou; to fear, not to delight.

Even in the final agony of the tragedy Emilia (when told by Othello that Iago had said that Desdemona was false) recurs to the theme—

> If he say so, may his pernicious soul
> Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart;
> She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

Under the fiery trial of the closing events of the tragedy, the character of Emilia emerges into nobility before she dies by the hand of her treacherous husband.

There are many blots on Othello's scutcheon, but perhaps the most shameful, and most unworthy of a noble mind, are those in which the worse parts of his nature are displayed in the foul language about Desdemona which he uses (Act III., Scene 3) in conversation with Iago. Poor Othello! sinned against, and sinning. Let his own words speak for him (Act V., Scene 2)—

> *Othello.*—Behold! I have a weapon,
> A better never did sustain itself
> Upon a soldier's thigh: I have seen the day,

That with this little arm, and this good sword,
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop:—But, O vain boast!
Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.—
Be not afraid though you do see me weapon'd;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear;
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires;—Where should Othello go?—
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!
Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl?
Even like thy chastity.—
O cursed, cursed slave!—Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—
O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead?
Dead? O! O! O!

Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO *carried in a chair, and* OFFICERS, *with* IAGO, *prisoner.*

Lodovico.—Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?
Othello.—That's he, that was Othello; here I am.
Lodovico.—Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.
Othello.—I look down towards his feet;—but that's a fable:
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.
[Othello *wounds* Iago.
Lodovico.—Wrench his sword from him.
Iago.— I bleed, sir; but not kill'd.
Othello.—I am not sorry neither; I'd have thee live;
For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

. . . . . .

No more of that:—I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one, that lov'd, not wisely, but too well;
Of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one, whose hand,
Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away,

Richer than all his tribe; of one, whose subdu'd eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum: Set you down this:
And say, besides,—that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him—thus. [*Stabs himself.*

Of Desdemona's manner of meeting her death, Lady Theodore Martin says—"Of what higher heroism than this—of what nobler love and self-abnegation—has history or romance any record?"

It is almost with a sense of awe that a commentator must view his task when he has to present a picture, however faint, of the works of Shakespeare in his prime. In his earlier days he had to consider the tastes of his audience and, to a greater or less extent, adapt himself to them.

When his position was assured, he became a prophet, and his utterances were received as those of a prophet.

He could therefore give free scope to his imagination. In Macbeth he could do so without shocking even courtly sensibilities, for King James, who patronized him, was himself a demonologist.

The key-note is struck by the presentment of the Witches in the first scene. In the third they salute Macbeth as Thane of Glamis and Cawdor and "King hereafter," and tell Banquo that he will get "kings though thou be none."

Macbeth adjures them to speak further, but they vanish.

Banquo.—The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them; whither have they vanished?
Macbeth.—Into the air, and what seemed corporal melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stayed!

Banquo.—Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten of the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?

While they are in the throes of astonishment at the predictions of the witches, Royal messengers arrive and fulfil, in part, the prophecy by saluting Macbeth as Thane of Glamis and of Cawdor. The different characters of Macbeth and Banquo are at once revealed to us:—

Macbeth (aside).— Glamis, and Cawdor:
The greatest is behind. . . .
Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me,
Promised no less to them?
Banquo.— That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequence. . . .
Macbeth (aside).—Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme. . . .
This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success
Commencing in a truth?—I am thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man, that function
Is smother'd in surmise; and nothing is,
But what is not.
Banquo.— Look, how our partner's rapt.
Macbeth (aside).—If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,
Without my stir.

Banquo.— New honours come upon him
Like our strange garments; cleave not to their mould,
But with the aid of use.
Macbeth (aside).— Come what come may;
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.
Banquo.—Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.
Macbeth.—Give me your favour:—my dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them.—Let us toward the king.—
Think upon what hath chanc'd; and, at more time,
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.
Banquo.— Very gladly.
Macbeth.—Till then, enough.—Come, friends.

He writes to his wife while he is still in attendance upon Duncan, but his mind is ever upon the prophecy. Even in colloquy with the king, he is overshadowed by gloom, and mutters—

(Aside.) Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

Shakespeare presents to us a striking picture of Lady Macbeth reading her husband's letter:

SCENE V.—INVERNESS. A ROOM IN MACBETH'S CASTLE.

Enter LADY MACBETH, *reading a letter.*

L. Macbeth.—They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves—air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me, Thane of Cawdor; by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with, Hail, king that shalt be! This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness; that thou mightest not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promis'd:—Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way: Thou would'st be great;
Art not without ambition; but without
The illness should attend it. What thou would'st highly,
That would'st thou holily; would'st not play false,
And yet would'st wrongly win: thou'd'st have, great Glamis,
That which cries, *Thus thou must do, if thou have it;*
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

. . . The raven himself is hoarse,
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse;
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect, and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell!
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry, *Hold, hold!*—

Enter MACBETH.

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Macbeth.— My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

L. Macbeth.— And when goes hence?
Macbeth.—To-morrow,—as he purposes.
L. Macbeth.— O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters;—To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under it. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my despatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.
Macbeth.—We will speak further.
L. Macbeth.— Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*

When King Duncan is a guest in the castle of Macbeth, we are taught how the mind of Macbeth is worked upon by doubts if not by scruples.

He is alone when he says:

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,—
We'd jump the life to come.—But in these cases,
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught, return
To plague the inventor: This even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against

The deep damnation of his taking-off:
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.—I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'er-leaps itself,
And falls on the other—

Enter LADY MACBETH.

How now, what news?

L. Macbeth.—He has almost supp'd; Why have you left the chamber?

Macbeth.—Hath he ask'd for me?

L. Macbeth.— Know you not, he has?

Macbeth.—We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

L. Macbeth.— Was the hope drunk,
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time,
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire? Would'st thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem;
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

Macbeth.— Pr'ythee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more, is none.

L. Macbeth.— What beast was it then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place,
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck; and know

How tender 'tis, to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn, as you
Have done to this.

Macbeth.— If we should fail,——

L. Macbeth.— We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep,
(Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him,) his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only: When in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie, as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

Macbeth.—Bring forth men-children only:
For thy undaunted metal should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have marked with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
That they have done it?

L. Macbeth— Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

Macbeth.— I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

As a contrast to the "false heart" of Macbeth, we are then shown how Banquo behaved. Tempted in the same manner, he stands upright in loyalty—

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!

He meets Macbeth, and says—

I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have showed some truth.
Macbeth.— I think not of them,
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We'd spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.
Banquo.— At your kind'st leisure.
Macbeth.—If you shall cleave to my consent,—when 'tis,
It shall make honour for you.
Banquo.— So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,
I shall be counselled.
Macbeth.—Good repose the while!
Banquo.—Thanks, sir, the like to you!

The honourable and the dishonourable having thus parted, the latter thus unbosoms himself in solitude—

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As that which now I draw.
Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.—
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest:—I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before.—There's no such thing:—
It is the bloody business, which informs
Thus to mine eyes.—Now, o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings;—and wither'd murder
Alarum'd by his sentinel the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,

With Tarquin's ravishing strides, toward his design
Moves like a ghost.—Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
The very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time
Which now suits with it.—Whiles I threat he lives.—
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives. [*Bell sounds.*
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell. [*Exit.*

Enter LADY MACBETH.

L. Macbeth.—That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold:
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire,—Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman
Which gives the stern'st good night.—He is about it,
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugged their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

Macbeth (within).— Who's there? What ho!

L. Macbeth.—Alack! I am afraid they have awaked
And 'tis not done: The attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark!—I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss them.—Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done it.

Enter MACBETH.

My husband!

Macbeth.—I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

L. Macbeth.—I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

Macbeth.— When?

L. Macbeth.— Now.

Macbeth.— As I descended?

L. Macbeth.—Ay.

Macbeth.— Hark! Who lies in the second chamber?

L. Macbeth.—Donalbain.

Macbeth.—This is a sorry sight. [*Looking on his hands.*

L. Macbeth.—A foolish thought; to say a sorry sight.

Macbeth.—There's one did laugh in his sleep, and one cried "Murder!"

That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and addressed them
Again to sleep. . . .
One cried "God bless us";—and "Amen" the other:
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:
Listening their fear, I could not say "Amen,"
When they did say "God bless us!"

L. Macbeth.—Consider it not so deeply.

Macbeth.—But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen?"
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.

L. Macbeth.— These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

Macbeth.—Methought, I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep, the innocent sleep;
Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast."

L. Macbeth.— What do you mean?

Macbeth.—Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all the house:
"Glamis hath murdered sleep: and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!"

L. Macbeth.—Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go, get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.—
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: Go, carry them; and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macbeth.— I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again, I dare not.

L. Macbeth.— Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping, and the dead,
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood,
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt. [*Exit. Knocking within.*

Macbeth.— Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?

What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnardine,
Making the green—one red!

Re-enter LADY MACBETH.

L. Macbeth.—My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. (*Knocking within.*) I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it then!—Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. (*Knocking.*) Hark! more knocking:
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers: be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

Macbeth.—To know my deed 'twere best not know myself.
(*Knocking.*) Wake Duncan with thy knocking! Would thou could'st! [*Exeunt.*

At this point, to relieve the strain upon the audience, Shakespeare introduces the coarse humour of the porter, who talks of "the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire." The murder is discovered. All is confusion. Macbeth slays the poor men of the chamber, whom his wife had stupefied to make them incapable of watching. Duncan's sons, trusting no one, flee at once from Scotland. The prophecy of the witches is wrought into fact, and Banquo thus reasons about it—

Banquo.—Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promis'd; and, I fear,
Thou play'dst most foully for't: yet it was said,
It should not stand in thy posterity;
But that myself should be the root, and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them,
(As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine,)
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? But, hush; no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, *as King*; LADY MACBETH, *as Queen*; LENOX, ROSSE, LORDS, LADIES, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Macbeth.—Here's our chief guest.

L. Macbeth.— If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all things unbecoming.

Macbeth.—To-night we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

It was easy for a tyrant to hire murderers in those wild days, and Macbeth, having sent for two—known to him—soliloquizes thus—

To be thus is nothing;
But to be safely thus:—Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that, which would be fear'd: 'Tis much he dares;
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none, but he
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,
My genius is rebuk'd; as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then, prophet-like,
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If it be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance!

He hires the murderers, who are to do the deed forthwith, Lady Macbeth in this case not being an accomplice in the crime.

But Nemesis for the past, and evil auguries for the future, disturb her mind, and she almost moans as she exclaims—

L. Macbeth.— Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter MACBETH.

How now, my lord? why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making?
Using those thoughts, which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without remedy,
Should be without regard: what's done, is done.

Macbeth.—We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it;
She'll close, and be herself; whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let
The frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further!

L. Macbeth.—Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial 'mong your guests to-night.

Macbeth.—So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams;
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

L. Macbeth.— You must leave this.

Macbeth.—O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st, that Banquo, and his Fleance, live.

L. Macbeth.—But in them nature's copy's not eterne.
Macbeth.—There's comfort yet; they are assailable;
Then be thou jocund: Ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere, to black Hecate's summons,
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.
L. Macbeth.— What's to be done?
Macbeth.—Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,
Skarf up the tender eye of pitiful day;
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood:
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their prey do rouse.
Thou marvel'st at my words; but hold thee still;
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.

He goes to the banquet-hall; but, in the place where he is about to sit, is confronted by the ghost of Banquo, invisible to all but himself. Even then, though the supernatural appearance confounds him, his physical daring does not blench—

Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with. . . .
What man dare, I dare.
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The armed rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble; or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If, trembling, I inhibit thee, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow,
Unreal mockery, hence!
Why, so; being gone,
I am a man again.

He was deceived. His fall from manhood was accomplished when, supernaturally tempted by the witches and his own ambition, and spurred on by his unscrupulous wife, he became a criminal.

But the vanishing of the ghost does not remove his horror, and he tells his guests—

> Can such things be,
> And overcome us like a summer's cloud
> Without our special wonder? You make me strange
> E'en to the disposition that I owe,
> When now I think you can behold such sights,
> And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
> When mine is blanch'd with fear.
> *Rosse.*—What sights, my lord?

The guests depart. Macbeth and his wife remain to ponder over the horrors of the scene, in which the supernatural intruder has been visible only to him. Still under influence of the vision he ejaculates—

> It will have blood: they say, blood will have blood:
> Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
> Augures, and understood relations, have
> By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
> The secret'st man of blood:—What is the night?
> *L. Macbeth.*—Almost at odds with morning, which is which.
> *Macbeth.*—How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
> At our great bidding?
> *L. Macbeth.*— Did you send to him, sir?
> *Macbeth.*—I hear it by the way; but I will send:
> There's not a one of them, but in his house
> I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,
> (Betimes I will,) unto the weird sisters:
> More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,
> By the worst means, the worst: for mine own good,
> All causes shall give way; I am in blood
> Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go o'er:
> Strange things I have in head, that will to hand;
> Which must be acted, ere they may be scann'd.

L. Macbeth.—You lack the season of all natures, sleep.
Macbeth.—Come, we'll to sleep: My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear, that wants hard use:—
We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt.*

Again he sees the witches, and in their show of apparitions finds that the progeny of Banquo will indeed reign in Scotland. They vanish, and he asks Lenox, who enters, if he saw them.

Lenox.— No, my lord.
Macbeth.—Came they not by you?
Infected be the air whereon they ride;
And damn'd, all those that trust in them!—I did hear
The galloping of horse: Who was't came by?
Lenox.—'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word,
Macduff is fled to England.
Macbeth.— Fled to England?
Lenox.—Ay, my good lord.
Macbeth.—Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook,
Unless the deed go with it: From this moment,
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do, before this purpose cool:
But no more sights!—

Anathematizing the witches for their predictions as to Banquo's issue, he still clings to their assurance that "no man that's born of woman" shall have power over Macbeth. But when the English army approaches Dunsinane, the encircling dangers make him soliloquize thus:—

I have lived long enough; my way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,

I must not look to have; but in their stead
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

The doctor tells him that Lady Macbeth is "troubled with thick-coming fancies." "Cure her of that," he replies.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doctor.— Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.
Macbeth.—Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it. . . . What is that noise? [*A cry within, of women.*
Seyton.—It is the cry of women, my good lord.
Macbeth.—I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir
As life were in't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaught'rous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.—Wherefore was that cry?
Seyton.—The queen, my lord, is dead.
Macbeth.—She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.—
To-morrow, and to-morrow and to-morrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.——

He goes to the battlefield, doomed but unfearing; and when Macduff tells him that he (Macduff) was one not

born in the conventional sense of the word, he is still able to die like a man-at-arms, though doomed.

> Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so,
> For it hath cowed my better part of man!
> And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
> That palter with us in a double sense;
> That keep the word of promise to the ear,
> And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.
> *Macduff.*—Then yield thee, coward,
> And live to be the show and gaze o' the time.
> We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
> Painted upon a pole; and underwrit,
> *Here may you see the tyrant.*
> *Macbeth.*— I'll not yield,
> To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
> And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
> Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
> And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,
> Yet I will try the last: Before my body
> I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff;
> And damn'd be he that first cries, *Hold, enough!*

The agony of Lady Macbeth is recorded elsewhere in these pages.

Any attempt to criticize the drama of Macbeth, as if the critics were capable of judging in what manner it might have been improved, would be foreign to these pages, which are framed in order to display the spirit of Shakespeare's work, and not to weary the reader by clogging them with vain personal fancies.

In scanning the Tragedy of King Lear, the boldest commentator may well feel a kind of awe when he contemplates the task before him. The gloom of the First Act hangs around us to the close. The scenes are laid in pagan times, and the criminal characters are worthy of the worst times recorded in history.

Volumes have been written about the sources from which Shakespeare drew materials for his dramas. He no

doubt had books in his own house, and the libraries of friends would be available for him.

There were published chronicles. Stow's Summary of English Chronicles, Holinshed's Chronicles, Camden's Brittannia, Daniel's History of England, and other works were all available for Shakespeare, as they were for other writers; and it is manifest that if an author discovers a narrative on which he can found a striking drama, it is desirable to use it, for a foundation on fact is a recommendation in the eyes of the public.

But he is not bound servilely to confine himself to historic facts. His own genius and imagination come to his aid, and transmute the situation in order to give them full scope.

By creating Cordelia Shakespeare redeemed the drama from loathsomeness, and for us, in the language of Professor Dowden, "the earth is made more beautiful by her life and by her death. Cordelia has strengthened the bonds of humanity; she has enriched the tradition of human goodness. It is better for each of us to breathe because she has been a woman."

Shakespeare shows the high purpose of the creation of Cordelia by making an unnamed bystander exclaim—

> A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch;
> Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,
> Who redeems nature from the general curse
> Which twain have brought her to.

Besides creating Cordelia as the angel of the drama to redeem it from its sordid aspects, Shakespeare added one of those characters through whom, under the name of "Fool," he illuminated the gloomiest scenes and relieved the strain upon the personages of the play, and upon the feelings of the audience.

The Fool in Lear is, perhaps, the most fitting example to select in order to show in these pages the functions assigned to the character.

After Lear has laid the foundation of his future miseries by his treatment of his daughters, and has begun to "perceive a most faint neglect of late" towards himself in the palace of Albany and Goneril, he suddenly says:

But where's my fool? I have not seen him these two days.

Knight.—Since my young lady's going into France, Sir, the fool hath much pined away.

Lear.—No more of that; I have noted it well. . . . Go, call hither my fool.

Before the Fool appears, Kent, in disguise, has rebuked the insolence of Goneril's steward, Oswald, and Lear is thanking Kent as the Fool enters and exclaims—

Let me hire him too;—Here's my coxcomb.

Lear.—How now, my pretty knave? how dost thou?

Fool.—Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent.—Why, fool?

Fool.—Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour: nay, an' thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb: why, this fellow has banished two of his daughters and done the third a blessing against his will: if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now, nuncle? Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters.

Lear.—Why, my boy?

Fool.—If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself: There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear.—Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool.—Truth's a dog that must to kennel; he must be whipp'd out, when Lady, the brach, may stand by the fire and stink.

Lear.—A pestilent gall to me!

Fool.—Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear.—Do.

Fool.—Mark it, nuncle:—

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,

Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest;
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

Lear.—This is nothing, fool.

Fool.—Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for't: Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear.—Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool.—Pr'ythee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to; he will not believe a fool. [*To* Kent.

Lear.—A bitter fool!

Fool.—Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

Lear.—No, lad; teach me.

Fool.—That lord, that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me,—
Or do thou for him stand:
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.

Lear.—Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool.—All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent.—This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool.—No, 'faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't: and ladies too, they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be snatching.—Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear.—What two crowns shall they be?

Fool.—Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back over the dirt: Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so.

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year; [*Singing.*
For wise men are grown foppish;
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

Lear.—When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool.—I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mother: for when thou gavest them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

Then they for sudden joy did weep, [*Singing.*
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.

Pr'ythee, nuncle, keep a school-master that can teach thy fool to lie; I would fain learn to lie.

Lear.—If you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipp'd.

Fool.—I marvel, what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipp'd for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipp'd for lying; and, sometimes, I am whipp'd for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind of thing, than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle, thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing in the middle. Here comes one o' the parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear.—How now, daughter? what makes that frontlet on? Methinks, you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool.—Thou wast a pretty fellow, when thou had'st no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure: I am better than thou art now: I am a fool, thou art nothing.—Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face [*to* Goneril) bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,

He that keeps nor crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some.—

That's a sheal'd peascod. [*Pointing to* Lear.

Goneril.—Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance; which, if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep;

. . . . . .

Fool.—For you trow, nuncle,
The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had its head bit off by its young.
So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

Lear.—Are you our daughter?

Goneril.—Come, sir, I would you would make use of that good wisdom whereof I know you are fraught; and put away these dispositions, which of late transform you from what you rightly are.

Fool.—May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?—Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

Lear.—Does any here know me?—This is not Lear: does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes? Either his notion weakens, or his discernings are lethargied.—Sleeping or waking?—Ha! sure 'tis not so.—Who is it that can tell me who I am?—

Fool.—Lear's shadow.

Lear.—I would learn that; for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters.—

Fool.—Which they will make an obedient father.

Lear.—Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Goneril.—Come, sir;

This admiration is much o' the favour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise:
. . . . . .

[*Exeunt* Lear *and others.*

Goneril (to the Fool).—You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

Fool.—Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry: take the fool with thee.

A fox when thou hast caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter;
So the fool follows after.

When Lear, with his knights, is leaving Goneril to test the condition and temper of Regan, the Fool says to Lear:

If a man's brains were in his heels, were't not in danger of kibes?

Lear.—Ay, boy.

Fool.—Then I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall ne'er go slipshod.

Lear.—Ha, ha, ha!

Fool.—Shalt see my other daughter will use thee kindly, for though she's as like this as a crab is like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear.—Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

Fool.—She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands in the middle of one's face?

Lear.—No.

Fool.—Why, to keep one's eyes on either side one's nose; that what a man can't smell out he may spy into.

Lear.—I did her wrong.

Fool.—Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear.—No.

Fool.—Nor I neither, but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear.—Why?

Fool.—Why, to put his head in: not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear.—I will forget my nature. So kind a father! Be my horses ready?

Fool.—Thy asses are gone about them. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven, is a pretty reason.

Lear.—Because they are not eight?

Fool.—Yes, indeed: thou would'st make a good fool.

Lear.—To take it again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

Fool.—If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear.—How's that?

Fool.—Thou should'st not have been old till thou had'st been wise.

Lear.—Oh! let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
Keep me in temper! I would not be mad!

Enter a GENTLEMAN.

Gentleman.—Ready, my lord.

Lear.—Come, boy.

A word may be said here about Shakespeare's Fools. They were, in fact, the recognized critics of the follies of the people of the world, and of the courts to which they were attached.

They were chartered libertines in speech, and only those who, like Malvolio, were sick of self-love, were offended by their sallies.

But the Fool in Lear fulfils a higher function. To the spectators of the mournful tragedy he affords some relief as it moves on to its lurid close. For Lear he provides some variation of thought even in gloom and distraction. No

peril, no privation, can drive him from his master's side, and almost with his last breath that master moans—

> And my poor fool is hang'd!—No, no, no life!

No name is ascribed to this faithful follower, but the picture of him "labouring to outjest the heart-struck injuries" of his master, who is bidding the elements "to let fall their horrible pleasure" upon him, has given him immortality as "the Fool in Lear" as long as the English language lives.

One of Shakespeare's heroes is Edgar, the son of Gloster, whose life is aimed at by his deluded father, but whose affection for that father defies all temptation and encounters all risks in returning good for evil.

His half-brother, Edmund, who seeks Edgar's life, is limned, on the other hand, as one of the most detestable villains whom Shakespeare's imagination has created. But "Kent, the banished Kent," redeems the page. Driven by Lear from his presence, and reft of his earldom, he returns in disguise to serve his enemy king—doing him "service improper for a slave."

And yet there have been those who have complained that Shakespeare could not depict heroes. "Such smiling rogues as these (Kent says of Goneril's steward, Oswald), like rats, oft bite the holy cords atwain"—

> Which are too intrinse to unloose; smooth every passion
> That in the natures of their lords rebels;
> Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods,
> Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
> With every gale and vary of their masters,
> As knowing nought, like dogs, but following.

For this plain speaking Regan and her husband put Kent into the stocks at night. The triumph of villainy at this stage seems complete.

Edgar, proclaimed as outlaw, disguises himself as a beggar—poor Tom. Lear, shaking the dust from his feet, quits Goneril's castle, and arriving at Gloster's, finds Kent in the stocks—

Fool.—Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied by the heads, dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs: when a man's over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden netherstocks. . . . All that follow their noses are led by the eyes but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again. I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That, sir, which serves and seeks for gain
  And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain
  And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry; the fool will stay
  And let the wise man fly:
The knave turns fool that runs away,
  The knave no fool, perdy.

Kent.—Where learned you this—fool?

Fool.—Not in the stocks, fool.

Enter LEAR *with* GLOSTER.

Lear.—Deny to speak with me? They are sick? They are weary?
They have travelled all the night? Mere fetches—
The images of revolt and flying off!
Fetch me a better answer.

Gloster.— My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke:
How unremovable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

Lear.—Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!—
Fiery? what quality? why, Gloster, Gloster,
I'd speak with the duke of Cornwall, and his wife.

Gloster.—Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear.—Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

Gloster.—Ay, my good lord.

Lear.—The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear father
Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:

Are they inform'd of this?—My breath and blood —
Fiery? the fiery duke?—Tell the hot duke, that—
No, but not yet:—may be, he is not well:
Infirmity doth still neglect all office,
Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves,
When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind
To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;
And am fallen out with my more headier will,
To take the indispos'd and sickly fit
For the sound man.—Death on my state! wherefore
[*Looking on* Kent.
Should he sit here? This act persuades me,
That this remotion of the duke and her
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth:
Go, tell the duke and his wife, I'd speak with them,
Now, presently; bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum,
Till it cry—*Sleep to death.*

Gloster.—I'd have all well betwixt you. [*Exit.*

Lear.—O me, my heart, my rising heart!—but, down.

Fool.—Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels, when she put them i' the paste alive; she knapp'd 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cry'd, *Down, wantons, down:* 'Twas her brother, that, in pure kindness to his horse, butter'd his hay.

More harrowing scenes ensue: Regan insolently bids her father to ask pardon from Goneril.

Lear.—Ask her forgiveness?—
Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
(*Kneeling.*) Dear daughter, I confess that I am old:
Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.

Regan.—Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks,
Return you to my sister.

Lear (*rising.*)— Never, Regan.
She hath abated me of half my train,
Looked black upon me; struck me with her tongue.

. . . . . .

Goneril appears on the scene, and the sisters tell their father that he needs no followers.

Lear.—O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:

Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's; thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm.—But, for true need,—
You heavens, give me but patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger!
O, let not women's weapons, water drops,
Stain my man's cheeks!—No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think, I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep:—
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep:—O, fool, I shall go mad!
[*Exeunt* Lear, Gloster, Kent, *and* Fool.

Lear goes out into the storm, and the malicious daughters order the doors to be locked.

Kent goes to aid him, and a passer-by describes the king.

Contending with the fretful elements;
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main
That things might change—or cease: tears his white hair,
Which the impetuous blasts with eyeless rage
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;
Strives in his little world of man to outscorn
The to-and-fro conflicting wind and rain.
This night wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs
And bids what will, take all.

Kent.— But who is with him?

Gentleman.—None but the fool, who labours to outjest
His heart-struck injuries.

SCENE II.—ANOTHER PART OF THE HEATH. STORM CONTINUES.

Enter LEAR *and* FOOL.

Lear.—Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts, and hurricanes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunder-bolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That make ingrateful man.

Fool.—O nuncle, court holy water in a dry house is better than this rain-water out o'door. Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters' blessing; here's a night pities neither wise man nor fool.

Lear.—Rumble thy bellyfull! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription; why then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man:—
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high-engender'd battles, 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

Fool.—He that has a house to put his head in, has a good head-piece.

The cod-piece that will house,
Before the head has any,
The head and he shall louse,—
So beggars marry many.
The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make,
Shall of a corn cry woe,
And turn his sleep to wake.

—for there was never yet fair woman, but she made mouths in a glass.

Lear.—No, I will be the pattern of all patience. I will say nothing.

Enter KENT.

Kent.—Who's there?

Fool.—Marry, here's grace, and a cod-piece; that's a wise man, and a fool.

Kent.—Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night,
Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves: since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot carry
The affliction, nor the fear.

Lear.— Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice: hide thee, thou bloody hand;
Thou perjured, and thou simular man of virtue,
That art incestuous: caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming
Hast practis'd on man's life!—close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
These dreadful summoners grace.—I am a man,
More sinn'd against, than sinning.

Kent.— Alack, bare-headed!
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest;
Repose you there: while I to this hard house,
(More hard than are the stones whereof 'tis rais'd;
Which even but now, demanding after you,
Denied me to come in,) return, and force
Their scanted courtesy.

Lear.— My wits begin to turn.—
That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.
I am cold myself.—Where is this straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool.— He that has a little tiny wit,—
With heigh, ho, the wind and the rain,—
Must make content with his fortunes fit;
For the rain it raineth every day.

Lear.—True, my good boy.—Come, bring us to this hovel.
[*Exeunt* Lear *and* Kent.

Fool.—This is a brave night to cool a courtezan.—I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors:
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues;
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
When usurers tell their gold i' the field;
And bawds and whores do churches build;—
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion.
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
That going shall be us'd with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his time. [*Exit.*

HEATH BEFORE A HOVEL.

Lear.—Thou think'st 'tis much, that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin; so 'tis to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear:
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,
Thou'dst meet the bear i' the mouth. When the mind's free,
The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
Save what beats here.—Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand,
For lifting food to't?—But I will punish home:—
No, I will weep no more.—In such a night
To shut me out!—Pour on; I will endure:—
In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!—
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,—
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
No more of that.—

Kent.— Good my lord, enter here.

Lear.—Pr'ythee, go in thyself; seek thine own ease;
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more.—But I'll go in:
In, boy: go first.—[*To the* Fool.] You houseless poverty,—
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep. [Fool *goes in.*

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

These pages do not afford space for fully portraying the noble character of Edgar, who, after proscription by the beguiled father, tends him so bravely and lovingly,—

became his guide,
Led him, begged for him, saved him from despair; . . .

His reflections when outlawed claim brief mention. His father, with face mangled by the tearing out of his eyes by Cornwall, comes in sight while Edgar is soliloquizing thus on a heath:—

Enter EDGAR.

Edgar.—Yet, better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
The lowest, and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,
Thou unsubstantial air, that I embrace!
The wretch, that thou hast blown unto the worst,
Owes nothing to thy blasts.—But who comes here?—

Enter GLOSTER, *led by an* OLD MAN.

My father, poorly led?—World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age,

Old Man.—O my good lord, I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Gloster.—Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:
Thy comforts can do me no good at all,
Thee they may hurt.

Old Man.—Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.
Gloster.—I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw: Full oft 'tis seen,
Our want secures us; and our mere defects
Prove our commodities.—Ah, dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say, I had eyes again!
Old Man.— How now? Who's there?
Edgar (*Aside.*)—O gods! Who is't can say, *I am at the worst?*
I am worse than e'er I was.
Old Man.— 'Tis poor mad Tom.
Edgar (*Aside.*)—And worse I may be yet: The worst is not,
So long as we can say this is the worst.

With what tender care he (still feigning madness) protects and guides his blind father, and wins him to a better frame of mind, must be read in the drama. Edgar himself tells the Duke of Albany the manner of his father's death:—

The bloody proclamation to escape
That followed me so near,—O, our lives' sweetness!
That we the pain of death would hourly die
Rather than die at once!—taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags, to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdained; and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,
Led him, begged for him, saved him from despair;
Never—O fault! revealed myself unto him
Until some half-hour past, when I was armed;
Not sure, though hoping of this good success,
I asked his blessing, and from first to last
Told him my pilgrimage: but his flawed heart—
Alack, too weak the conflict to support,
Burst smilingly.

With such touches, as with light from heaven, could Shakespeare temper the gloom which pervades the atmosphere of the sombre tragedy of Lear.

But here it is necessary to revert to Cordelia and her father, at Dover.

A gentleman reports to Kent that she read the letters sent to her :—

And now and then an ample tear trilled down
Her delicate cheek: it seemed she was a queen
Over her passion, who most rebel-like
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent.— O, then it moved her.

Gentleman.—Not to a rage; patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
Were like a better day: Those happy smiles,
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd.—In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,
If all could so become it.

Kent.— Made she no verbal question?

Gentleman.—'Faith, once, or twice, she heav'd the name of *father*
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;
Cried, *Sisters! sisters!—Shame of ladies! sisters!*
Kent! father! sisters! What? i' the storm! i' the night?
Let pity not be believ'd!—There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd:—then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

Kent.— It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

Gentleman.—No.

Kent.—Was this before the king return'd?

Gentleman.— No, since.

Kent.—Well, sir; The poor distress'd Lear is i' the town:
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gentleman.— Why, good sir?

Kent.—A sovereign shame so elbows him: his own unkindness,
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her

To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters,—these things sting
His mind so venomously, that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

SCENE IV.

Enter CORDELIA, PHYSICIAN, *and* SOLDIERS.

Cordelia.—Alack, 'tis he; why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea: singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter, and furrow-weeds,
With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn.—A century send forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an* Officer.
What can man's wisdom do,
In the restoring his bereaved sense?
He, that helps him, take all my outward worth.

Physician.—There is means, madam:
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cordelia. All bless'd secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant, and remediate,
In the good man's desires!—Seek, seek for him;
Lest his ungoverned rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.

After another harrowing display of Lear's madness, he is secured and treated by the physician.

SCENE VII.

Enter CORDELIA *and* KENT.

Cordelia.—O thou good Kent, how shall I live, and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.

Kent.—To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'er-paid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
No more, nor clipp'd, but so.

Cordelia.— Be better suited:
These weeds are memories of those worser hours;
I pr'ythee, put them off.
Kent.— Pardon me, dear madam,
Yet to be known, shortens my main intent:
My boon I make it, that you know me not,
Till time and I think meet.
Cordelia.—Then be it so, my good lord,—How does the king?
[*To the* Physician.
Physician.—Madam, sleeps still.
Cordelia.—O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
The untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up,
Of this child-changed father!
Physician.— So please your majesty,
That we may wake the king; he hath slept long.
Cordelia.—Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd?
Gentleman.—Ay, madam; in the heaviness of his sleep,
We put fresh garments on him.
Physician.—Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.
Cordelia.— Very well.
Physician.—Please you, draw near.—Louder the music there.
Cordelia.—O my dear father! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms, that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!
Kent.— Kind and dear princess.
Cordelia.—Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face
To be opposed against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross-lightning? to watch (poor perdu!)
With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; And wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder, that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.—He wakes; speak to him.

Physician.—Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.
Cordelia.—How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?
Lear.—You do me wrong, to take me out of the grave:—
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.
Cordelia.— Sir, do you know me?
Lear.—You are a spirit, I know; When did you die?
Cordelia.—Still, still far wide!
Physician.—He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.
Lear.—Where have I been? Where am I?—Fair day-light?—
I am mightily abused.—I should e'en die with pity,
To see another thus.—I know not what to say.—
I will not swear, these are my hands:—let's see;
I feel this pin prick. 'Would I were assur'd
Of my condition.
Cordelia.— O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:—
No, sir, you must not kneel.
Lear.— Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward; and, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks, I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is: and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night: Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.
Cordelia.— And so I am, I am.
Lear.—Be your tears wet? Yes, 'faith. I pray, weep not:
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know, you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
You have some cause, they have not.
Cordelia.— No cause, no cause.
Lear.—Am I in France?
Kent.—In your own kingdom, sir.
Lear.—Do not abuse me.
Physician.—Be comforted, good madam: the great rage,
You see, is cur'd in him: and yet it is danger

To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in: trouble him no more,
Till further settling.

Cordelia.—Will't please your highness walk?

Lear.— You must bear with me:
Pray now, forget and forgive: I am old, and foolish.

There is no need to exhibit in these pages the final horrors of the tragedy, they are known to all, and are such as need no comment here. Lear's last words are in some sense consoling. They show that no overbearing selfishness remains in his mind, but that memories of the two human beings who loved him so devotedly control him as he dies:—

And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou *(Cordelia)* no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!
Pray you undo this button: thank you, sir,
Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
Look there, look there! *(Dies.)* . . .

* *Kent.*—Vex not his ghost: O let him pass! he hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

After the production of Julius Cæsar, Othello, Macbeth, and Lear, it would seem that Shakespeare (whether with or without consultation with his partners in the company to which he belonged) thought it expedient to make a change in his productions for the stage, and Troilus and Cressida, and Antony and Cleopatra followed in quick succession.

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* Attention should perhaps be called to Lear's momentary remembrance of Kent in the final scene. During Kent's service as Caius, in disguise, Lear had not recognized him as the banished Earl. For the battle Kent had armed himself, and (as Edgar narrates) "with his strong arms he fastened on my neck." Afterwards Lear recognizes Kent, and says, "This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?"

Though both, in one sense, historical, they are made specially personal in the characters after whom they are named.

No attempt was made to produce a picture of the manners of a prehistoric time, and Æneas was represented as using language such as was attributed to knight errants of the Christian era.

Careless of chronology, the dramatist represents Hector as quoting Aristotle; but he places words in the mouth of Ulysses which demand notice, as an eminent man of modern time characterized them as the finest in modern language. (Act I., Scene 3.)

When that the general is not like the hive,
To whom the foragers shall all repair,
What honey is expected? Degree being vizarded,
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.
The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order:
And therefore is the glorious planet, Sol,
In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd
Amidst the other; whose med'cinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts, like the commandment of a king,
Sans check, to good and bad: But, when the planets,
In evil mixture, to disorder wander,
What plagues, and what portents! what mutiny!
What raging of the sea! shaking of earth!
Commotion in the winds! frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixture! O, when degree is shak'd,
Which is the ladder to all high designs,
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenitive and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,

But by degree, stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark! what discord follows! each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
And make a sop of all this solid globe:
Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead:
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,
Between whose endless jar justice resides,
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then every thing includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, a universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce a universal prey,
And last eat up himself.

The same speaker, addressing the same auditor (Act III., Scene 3), says:—

Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
A great-sized monster of ingratitudes:
Those scraps are good deeds past which are devoured
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon
As done: perseverance, good my lord,
Keeps honour bright; to have done is to hang
Quite out of fashion like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For honour travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast: keep then the path;
For emulation hath a thousand sons
That one by one pursue: if you give way
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
Like to an entered tide they all rush by
And leave you hindmost:
Or like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
O'errun and trampled on: then what they do in present,
Though less than yours in past shall o'ertop yours;
For Time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,

And with his arms outstretched as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing. O let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;
That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past,
And give to dust that is a little gilt
More land than gilt o'erdusted.
The present eye praises the present object.

Perhaps it should be noted that Shakespeare, true to his custom, introduced Thersites to diversify the dialogue, as his clowns diversified it in more modern days.

Achilles.—Come, thou shalt bear a letter to him (Ajax) straight.

Thersites.—Let me bear another to his horse, for that's the more capable creature.

Achilles.—My mind is troubled like a fountain stirred. And I myself see not the bottom of it. [*Exeunt* Achilles *and* Patroclus.

Thersites.—Would the fountain of your mind were clear again, that I might water an ass at it. I had rather be a tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance.*

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* There is a droll contradiction between a statement by one of the characters in Troilus and Cressida, and the categorically pronounced opinion of Lord Bacon on gravitation. Bacon, in his De Augmentis, wrote—"Inquire whether the quantity of a body can be so increased as entirely to lose the motion of gravity; as in the earth which is pendulous, but falls not. Can there be other substances so massive as to support themselves? For the motion towards the centre of the earth is a fiction."

One of Shakespeare's characters is made to say in Troilus and Cressida, "As true as earth to the centre," and another says—

But the strong base and building of my love
Is as the very centre of the earth
Drawing all things to it.

If Bacon condescended to visit the theatre when Troilus and Cressida was acted, he must have been shocked.

Doubtless, at the time of the production of Troilus and Cressida, Shakespeare and his partners thought it suitable to the public taste, and the cognate character of the play next produced, Antony and Cleopatra, may seem in some degree to confirm such an idea. The heroines of both dramas are equally selfish, but Cleopatra's royalty gives her more power to display her charms and her vices. Enobarbus thus describes her to Agrippa:—

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that
The winds were love-sick with them: the oars were silver;
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water, which they beat, to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggar'd all description: she did lie
In her pavilion, (cloth-of-gold, of tissue,)
O'er-picturing that Venus, where we see,
The fancy out-work nature: on each side her,
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid, did.

Agrippa.— O, rare for Antony.

Enobarbus.—Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,
And made their bends adornings: at the helm
A seeming Mermaid steers; the silken tackle
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,
That yarely frame the office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast
Her people out upon her; and Antony,
Enthron'd in the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
And made a gap in nature.

Agrippa.— Rare Egyptian!

Enobarbus.—Upon her landing, Antony sent to her,

Invited her to supper: she replied,
It should be better, he became her guest;
Which she entreated: Our courteous Antony,
Whom ne'er the word of *No* woman heard speak,
Being barber'd ten times o'er, goes to the feast;
And, for his ordinary, pays his heart,
For what his eyes eat only.

Agrippa.— Royal wench!
She made great Cæsar lay his sword to bed;
He plough'd her, and she cropp'd.

Enobarbus.— I saw her once
Hop forty paces through the public street:
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,
That she did make defect, perfection,
And, breathless, power breathe forth.

Mecænas.—Now Antony must leave her utterly.

Enobarbus.—Never; he will not;
Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety: Other women
Cloy th' appetites they feed; but she makes hungry,
Where most she satisfies. For vilest things
Become themselves in her; that the holy priests
Bless her. . . .

As the play is developed, the foresight of Enobarbus is confirmed, and even his soldier-like allegiance is sapped by Antony's folly:—

Enobarbus.— . . . I see men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them
To suffer all alike. That he should dream,
Knowing all measures, the full Cæsar will
Answer his emptiness! Cæsar, thou hast subdued
His judgment too. . . .
Mine honesty and I begin to square.
The loyalty well held to fools does make
Our faith mere folly; yet he that can endure
To follow with allegiance a fall'n lord,
Does conquer him that did his master conquer,
And earns a place i' the story.

But Antony's distraction borders on lunacy, and Enobarbus, in spite of his resolution, is driven to say:—

> Now he'll outstare the lightning. To be furious
> Is to be frighted out of fear; and in that mood
> The dove will peck the estridge; and I see still
> A diminution in our captain's brain
> Restores his heart: when valour preys on reason,
> It eats the sword it fights with. I will seek
> Some way to leave him.

The soldier-tragedy, within the greater national catastrophe, comes to a speedy close. Enobarbus, bereft of patience with Antony's wild distraction between his duty and Cleopatra's enchantments, deserts to Cæsar, and Antony, without a moment's delay, sends the deserter's treasures to him with

> Gentle adieus and greetings;
> Say that I wish he never find more cause
> To change a master. O! my fortunes have
> Corrupted honest men! Dispatch. Enobarbus!

The deserter has no sooner deserted than he finds himself miserable:

> . . . I have done ill;
> Of which I do accuse myself so sorely,
> That I will joy no more.

He refuses to accept his restored wealth—bids a soldier take it—and declares:—

> I am alone the villain of the earth,
> And feel I am so most. O Antony,
> Thou mine of bounty, how would'st thou have paid
> My better service, when my turpitude
> Thou dost so crown with gold! This blows my heart:
> If swift thought break it not, a swifter mean
> Shall outstrike thought: but thought will do't, I feel.
> I fight against thee!—No: I will go seek
> Some ditch, wherein to die; the foul'st best fits
> My latter part of life. [*Exit.*

SCENE IX.—CÆSAR'S CAMP.

Sentinels *on their post. Enter* ENOBARBUS.

1 *Soldier.*—If we be not reliev'd within this hour,
We must return to the court of guard: The night
Is shiny; and, they say, we shall embattle
By the second hour i' the morn.
2 *Soldier.*— This last day was
A shrewd one to us.
Enobarbus.— O, bear me witness, night,—
3 *Soldier.*—What man is this?
2 *Soldier.*— Stand close, and list to him.
Enobarbus.—Be withness to me, O thou blessed moon,
When men revolted shall upon record
Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did
Before thy face repent!—
1 *Soldier.*— Enobarbus!
3 *Soldier.*— Peace;
Hark further.
Enobarbus.—O sovereign mistress of true melancholy,
The poisonous damp of night disponge upon me;
That life, a very rebel to my will,
May hang no longer on me: Throw my heart
Against the flint and hardness of my fault;
Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,
And finish all foul thoughts. O Antony,
Nobler than my revolt is infamous,
Forgive me in thine own particular;
But let the world rank me in register
A master-leaver, and a fugitive:
O Antony! O Antony! [*Dies.*

Thus does Shakespeare's imagination relieve with touches from the outer world and his own genius the sordid picture of the lives of Antony and Cleopatra.

The production of Coriolanus is assigned to this period of Shakespeare's London career. Again he used the facts as recorded by Plutarch, and sometimes adopted the *ipsissima verba* of North's translation.

If the words imputed to Volumnia by Plutarch were, in Shakespeare's opinion, the fittest for her situation,

Shakespeare put them into her mouth. Why should he not do so? His English audience were entitled to the best at his command, and he gave it to them. Pithy sayings live long in popular memory and speech, and thus some of Volumnia's words may have been treasured to this day.

One critic of the play has declared that the manner in which the mob of Roman citizens was depicted by Shakespeare proves that the "moral" of Coriolanus was "to prove that those who have little shall have less, and that those who have much shall take all that others have left." On this statement another critic remarks that "the dramatic moral of Coriolanus lies far nearer to the very opposite of the statement." This war between critics springs from the fact that one of them seeks for Shakespeare's own opinions in the words which he puts into the mouths of the citizen-mob, and the other finds them in the words which he puts into the mouth of Coriolanus. The search of both critics is vain; for Shakespeare's imagination enabled him to ascribe to Coriolanus and to the citizens the words appropriate to their character and condition. The Roman mob utters the same wild absurdities which Shakespeare had many years before ascribed to Jack Cade and his followers in London; and the punishment which is meted out to Coriolanus for his obstinate and overweening pride marks the moral of the drama with regard to him. In the first scene we are introduced to "a company of mutinous citizens."

First Citizen.—First, you know Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

All.—We know it, we know it.

First Citizen.—Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict?

All.—No more talking on't; let it be done: away, away!

Then follows Menenius with his fable about the belly and the members of the body. It is so often quoted that it need not be retold here.

The Senate grants Tribunes (Sicinius and Brutus) to defend "the vulgar wisdoms" of the citizens, and Marcius goes to the Volscian war.

We are soon introduced to his mother, Volumnia, and his wife, Valeria; the first a typical Roman matron, the second a timid affectionate wife who, when Volumnia speaks proudly of the wounds received by Marcius as a stripling, says —

> But had he died in the business, madam; how then?
>
> *Volumnia.*—Then his good report should have been my son. I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely: had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

Marcius, after prodigies of valour, is dubbed, on the field of battle, Coriolanus; and he returns to Rome to be worsted in civil strife by the new Tribunes, who, mean in motive and deficient in capacity, are astute enough to undermine the popularity of Coriolanus, and drive him from friends and home to the outer world.

The senators in the Capitol hear, from the mouth of Cominius, a narration of the deeds of Coriolanus, who is sent for.

> *Re-enter* CORIOLANUS.
>
> *Menenius.*—The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleas'd
> To make thee consul.
> *Coriolanus.*— I do owe them still
> My life, and services.
> *Menenius.*— It then remains,
> That you do speak to the people.
> *Coriolanus.*— I do beseech you,
> Let me o'erleap that custom; for I cannot
> Put on the gown, stand naked, and entreat them,

For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage: please you,
That I may pass this doing.

Sicinius.— Sir, the people
Must have their voices; neither will they bate
One jot of ceremony.

Menenius.— Put them not to't:—
Pray you, go fit you to the custom; and
Take to you, as your predecessors have,
Your honour with your form.

Coriolanus.— It is a part
That I shall blush in acting, and might well
Be taken from the people.

Brutus.— Mark you that?

Coriolanus.—To brag unto them,—Thus I did, and thus;—
Show them the unaching scars which I should hide,
As if I had receiv'd them for the hire
Of their breath only.

It is interesting to scan the manner in which Shakespeare's imagination portrayed the humours of a mob in Rome in the early days.

SCENE III.—THE FORUM.

Enter several CITIZENS.

1 *Citizen.*—Once, if he do require our voices, we ought not to deny him.

2 *Citizen.*—We may, sir, if we will.

3 *Citizen.*—We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do: for if he show us his wounds, and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds, and speak for them; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is monstrous: and for the multitude to be ingrateful, were to make a monster of the multitude; of the which, we being members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous members.

1 *Citizen.*—And to make us no better thought of, a little help will serve: for once, when we stood up about the corn, he himself stuck not to call us the many-headed multitude.

3 *Citizen.*—We have been called so of many; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely coloured: and truly I think, if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south; and

their consent of one direct way, should be at once to all points o' the compass.

2 *Citizen.*—Think you so? Which way, do you judge, my wit would fly?

3 *Citizen.*—Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's will, 'tis strongly wedged up in a block-head; but if it were at liberty, 'twould, sure, southward.

2 *Citizen.*—Why that way?

3 *Citizen.*—To lose itself in a fog; where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return for conscience sake, to help to get thee a wife.

2 *Citizen.*—You are never without your tricks:—You may, you may.

3 *Citizen.*—Are you all resolved to give your voices? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man.

Enter CORIOLANUS *and* MENENIUS.

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility; mark his behaviour. We are not to stay altogether, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests by particulars: wherein every one of us has a single honour, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues: therefore follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him.

All.—Content, content. [*Exeunt.*

Menenius.—O sir, you are not right: have you not known
The worthiest men have don't?

Coriolanus.— What must I say?—
I pray sir,—Plague upon't! I cannot bring
My tongue to such a pace:——Look, sir;——my wounds;—
I got them in my country's service, when
Some certain of your brethren roar'd, and ran
From the noise of our own drums.

Menenius.— O me, the gods!
You must not speak of that: you must desire them
To think upon you.

Coriolanus.— Think upon me? Hang 'em,
I would they would forget me, like the virtues
Which our divines lose by them.

Menenius.— You'll mar all;
I'll leave you: Pray you, speak to them, I pray you,
In wholesome manner. [*Exit.*

Enter two CITIZENS.

Coriolanus.— Bid them wash their faces,
And keep their teeth clean.—So, here comes a brace.
You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

1 *Citizen.*—We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you to't.

Coriolanus.—Mine own desert.

2 *Citizen.*— Your own desert?

Coriolanus.— Ay, not
Mine own desire.

1 *Citizen.*— How! not your own desire?

Coriolanus.—No, sir:
'Twas never my desire yet,
To trouble the poor with begging.

1 *Citizen.*—You must think, if we give you any thing,
We hope to gain by you.

Coriolanus.—Well then, I pray, your price o' the consul-ship?

1 *Citizen.*—The price is, sir, to ask it kindly.

Coriolanus.— Kindly!
Sir, I pray, let me ha't: I have wounds to show you,
Which shall be yours in private.—Your good voice, sir;
What say you?

2 *Citizen.*— You shall have it, worthy sir.

Coriolanus.—A match, sir:—
There is in all two worthy voices begg'd:—
I have your alms; adieu.

1 *Citizen.*— But this is something odd.

2 *Citizen.*—An 'twere to give again—But 'tis no matter.

[*Exeunt two* Citizens.

Enter two other CITIZENS.

Coriolanus.—Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your voices, that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown.

3 *Citizen.*—You have deserved nobly of your country, and you have not deserved nobly.

Coriolanus.—Your enigma?

3 *Citizen.*—You have been a scourge to her enemies, you have been a rod to her friends; you have not, indeed, loved the common people.

Coriolanus.—You should account me the more virtuous, that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a condition they account gentle: and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod, and be off to them most counterfeitly: that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitch-

ment of some popular man, and give it bountifully to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you, I may be consul.

4 *Citizen.*—We hope to find you our friend; and therefore give you our voices heartily.

3 *Citizen.*—You have received many wounds for your country.

Coriolanus.—I will not seal your knowledge with showing them. I will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no further.

Both Citizens.—The gods give you joy, sir, heartily! [*Exeunt.*

Coriolanus.—Most sweet voices!—

Better it is to die, better to starve,
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.
Why in this wolfish togue should I stand here,
To beg of Hob and Dick, that do appear,
Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to't:—
What custom wills, in all things should we do't,
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heap'd
For truth to o'erpeer. Rather than fool it so,
Let the high office and the honour go
To one that would do thus. I am half through:
The one part suffer'd, the other will I do.

Enter three more CITIZENS.

Here come more voices.
Your voices! for your voices I have fought;
Watch'd for your voices; for your voices bear
Of wounds two dozen odd; battles thrice six
I have seen and heard of; for your voices have
Done many things, some less, some more: your voices:
Indeed I would be consul.

6 *Citizen.*—He has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice.

7 *Citizen.*—Therefore let him be consul: the gods give him joy, and make him good friend to the people!

All.—Amen, amen. God save the noble consul! [*Exeunt.*

Coriolanus.—Worthy voices!

Apparently the proud man has obtained the pinnacle of success.

One critic (Hazlitt) would seem to have been so indignant at Coriolanus' brief triumph that he wrote:—"The whole dramatic moral of Coriolanus is that those who have

little shall have less, and that those who have much shall take all that others have left. The people are poor, therefore they ought to be starved," &c.

Another critic finds Hazlitt's dictum "extravagantly untrue."

The moral of the drama is indeed exactly opposite to that implied in Hazlitt's censure. It is the condign punishment of the over-weening pride of the patrician Coriolanus, which, in despite of the warnings of Volumnia and others, brought about his destruction.

The ineptitudes of the mob of citizens are but the under-play which give life and human interest to the drama and aid its development.

When Coriolanus has received "the voices" of the citizens, the Tribunes reproach them for their "childish friendliness," and show their own dishonesty by advising the citizens to declare falsely that they only voted for Coriolanus because the Tribunes urged them to do so.

Even this depth of baseness does not shock the assembled citizens, and critics of Shakespeare have complained that he was harsh and unjust in representing thus the nefariousness of the Tribunes and the complicity or folly of the crowd.

Nevertheless, courts of justice in the twentieth century occasionally reveal that the vices or weaknesses exposed by Shakespeare exist in our own time, and the salaried mouthpiece of the ignorant often grows fat at their expense.

Obedient to the Tribunes, the citizens—on the ground that "the people are the city"—demand "the death" of Coriolanus, who draws his sword, and his accusers are put to flight for the moment.

The scene in which Coriolanus confronts his mother at his own house must be perused. Reason and passion are put before us.

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN CORIOLANUS' HOUSE.

Enter CORIOLANUS *and* PATRICIANS.

Coriolanus.—Let them put all about mine ears; present me
Death on the wheel, or at wild horses' heels;
Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,
That the precipitation might down stretch
Below the beam of sight, yet will I still
Be thus to them.

1 *Patrician.*— You do the nobler.

Coriolanus.—I muse, my mother
Does not approve me further, who was wont
To call them woollen vassals, things created
To buy and sell with groats; to show bare heads
In congregations, to yawn, be still, and wonder,
When one but of my ordinance stood up
To speak of peace, or war. [*Enter* VOLUMNIA.] I talk of you;
Why did you wish me milder? Would you have me
False to my nature? Rather say, I play
The man I am.

Volumnia.— O, sir, sir, sir,
I would have had you put your power well on,
Before you had worn it out.

Coriolanus.— Let go.

Volumnia.—You might have been enough the man you are,
With striving less to be so. Lesser had been
The thwartings of your dispositions, if
You had not show'd them how you were dispos'd,
Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

Coriolanus.— Let them hang.

Volumnia.—Ay, and burn too.

Enter MENENIUS *and* SENATORS.

Menenius.—Come, come, you have been too rough, something too rough;
You must return, and mend it.

1 *Senator.*— There's no remedy;
Unless, by not so doing, our good city
Cleave in the midst, and perish.

Volumnia.— Pray be counsell'd:
I have a heart as little apt as yours,
But yet a brain, that leads my use of anger
To better vantage.

Menenius.— Well said, noble woman:
Before he should thus stoop to the herd, but that
The violent fit o' the time craves it as physic
For the whole state, I would put mine armour on,
Which I can scarcely bear.
Coriolanus.—What must I do?
Menenius.— Return to the tribunes.
Coriolanus.— Well,
What then? what then?
Menenius.— Repent what you have spoke.
Coriolanus.—For them?—I cannot do it to the gods;
Must I then do't to them?
Volumnia.— You are too absolute;
Though therein you can never be too noble,
But when extremities speak. I have heard you say,
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,
I' the war do grow together: grant that, and tell me,
In peace, what each of them by th' other lose,
That they combine not there.
Coriolanus.— Tush, tush!
Menenius.— A good demand.
Volumnia.—If it be honour, in your wars, to seem
The same you are not, (which, for your best ends,
You adopt your policy,) how is it less, or worse,
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour, as in war; since that to both
It stands in like request?
Coriolanus.— Why force you this?
Volumnia.—Because that now it lies you on to speak
To the people; not by your own instruction,
Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you to,
But with such words that are but roted in
Your tongue, though bastards, and but syllables
Of no allowance, to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all,
Than to take in a town with gentle words,
Which else would put you to your fortune, and
The hazard of much blood.—
I would dissemble with my nature, where
My fortunes, and my friends, at stake, requir'd,
I should do so in honour: I am in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;

And you will rather show our general louts
How you can frown, than spend a fawn upon them,
For the inheritance of their loves, and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.

Menenius.— Noble lady!—
Come, go with us; speak fair: you may salve so,
Not what is dangerous present, but the loss
Of what is past.

Volumnia.— I pr'ythee now, my son,
Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand;
And thus far having stretch'd it, (here be with them,)
Thy knee bussing the stones, (for in such business
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of the ignorant
More learned than the ears,) waving thy head,
Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart,
Now humble, as the ripest mulberry,
That will not hold the handling: or, say to them,
Thou art their soldier, and being bred in broils,
Hast not the soft way, which, thou dost confess,
Were fit for thee to use, as they to claim,
In asking their good loves; but thou wilt frame
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far
As thou hast power, and person.

Menenius.— This but done,
Even as she speaks, why, all their hearts were yours:
For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free
As words to little purpose.

Volumnia.— Pr'ythee now,
Go, and be rul'd: although, I know, thou had'st rather
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf,
Than flatter him in a bower. Here is Cominius.

Enter COMINIUS.

Cominius.—I have been i' the market-place: and, sir, 'tis fit
You make strong party, or defend yourself
By calmness, or by absence; all's in anger.

Menenius.—Only fair speech.

Cominius.— I think, 'twill serve, if he
Can thereto frame his spirit.

Volumnia.— He must, and will:—
Pr'ythee now, say you will, and go about it.

Coriolanus.—Must I go show them my unbarbed sconce?
Must I, with my base tongue, give to my noble heart

A lie, that it must bear? Well, I will do't:
Yet were there but this single plot to lose,
This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind it,
And throw it against the wind.—To the market-place:—
You have put me now to such a part, which never
I shall discharge to the life.

Cominius.— Come, come, we'll prompt you.

Volumnia.—I pr'ythee now, sweet son; as thou hast said,
My praises made thee first a soldier, so,
To have my praise for this, perform a part
Thou hast not done before.

Coriolanus.— Well, I must do't:
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! My throat of war be turn'd,
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe
Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep! The smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks; and school-boys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight! A beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips; and my arm'd knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath receiv'd an alms!—I will not do't:
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And, by my body's action, teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

Volumnia.— At thy choice then:
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour,
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin; let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride, than fear
Thy dangerous stoutness; for I mock at death
With as big heart as thou. Do as thou list.
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst it from me;
But owe thy pride thyself.

Coriolanus.— Pray, be content;
Mother, I am going to the market-place;
Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,
Cog their hearts from them, and come home belov'd
Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going:
Commend me to my wife. I'll return consul;
Or never trust to what my tongue can do
I' the way of flattery, further.

Volumnia.— Do your will. [*Exit.*

Cominius.—Away, the tribunes do attend you: arm yourself
To answer mildly; for they are prepar'd
With accusations, as I hear, more strong
Than are upon you yet.
Coriolanus.—The word is, mildly:—Pray you, let us go:
Let them accuse me by invention, I
Will answer in mine honour.
Menenius.— Ay, but mildly.
Coriolanus.—Well, mildly be it then; mildly! [*Exeunt.*

But his ungovernable temper scatters away his mother's wise counsels, and maddened by the sly provocations of the Tribunes, one of whom calls him "a traitor to the people," he seals his own fate by exclaiming—

The fires in the lowest hell fold in the people!
Call me their traitor! Thou injurious tribune!
Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,
In thy hands clutched as many millions, in
Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say
"Thou liest" unto thee with a voice as free
As I do pray the gods.

He promptly receives the wages of his intemperance in the shape of banishment, and exclaims—

You common cry of curs! whose breath I hate
As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcases of unburied men
That do corrupt my air, I banish you;
And here remain with your uncertainty!
Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts!
Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes,
Fan you into despair! Have the power still
To banish your defenders; till, at length,
Your ignorance, (which finds not, till it feels,)
Making not reservation of yourselves,
(Still your own foes,) deliver you, as most
Abated captives, to some nation
That won you without blows! Despising,
For you, the city, thus I turn my back:
There is a world elsewhere.
[*Exeunt* Coriolanus, Cominius, Menenius, Senators, *and* Patricians.

Ædiles.—The people's enemy is gone, is gone!
Citizen.—Our enemy's banish'd! he is gone! Hoo! hoo!
[*The people shout, and throw up their caps.*
Sicinius.—Go, see him out at gates, and follow him,
As he hath follow'd you, with all despite;
Give him deserv'd vexation. Let a guard
Attend us through the city.

Coriolanus is seen at his best when in company with his wife and mother, in parting from whom he says—

'Tis fond to wail inevitable strokes,
As 'tis to laugh at them. My mother, you wot well,
My hazards still have been your solace; and
Believe 't not lightly, though I go alone,
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen
Makes fear'd and talked of more than seen, your son
Will, or exceed the common, or be caught
With cautelous baits and practice.

At this crisis even Volumnia's matronly gravity gives way. Meeting the Tribunes, she says to Sicinius—

Hadst thou foxship
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome
Than thou hast spoken words?
Sicinius.— O blessed heavens!
Volumnia.—More noble blows than ever thou wise words.
And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what; yet go:
Nay, but thou shalt stay too: I would my son
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,
His good sword in his hand.
Sicinius.— What then?
Volumnia.— What then?
He'd make an end of thy posterity.

When Coriolanus told his mother that she might hear what would "exceed the common," he spoke within bounds, for he betook himself, disguised in mean apparel, to Antium, a Volscian city, where his old enemy, Aufidius, held sway. The servants vainly try to thrust him out, and one of them said: "What an arm he has! he turned me about with his finger and his thumb as one would set up a top."

Aufidius being sent for, says:

Whence comest thou? what would'st thou? Thy name?
Why speak'st not? Speak, man: What's thy name?
Coriolanus.— If, Tullus, [*Unmuffling.*
Not yet thou know'st me, and seeing me, dost not
Think me for the man I am, necessity
Commands me name myself.
Aufidius.— What is thy name?
[Servants *retire.*
Coriolanus.—A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears,
And harsh in sound to thine.
Aufidius.— Say, what's thy name?
Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face
Bears a command in 't; though thy tackle's torn,
Thou show'st a noble vessel: What's thy name?
Coriolanus.—Prepare thy brow to frown: Know'st thou me yet?
Aufidius.—I know thee not:—Thy name?
Coriolanus.—My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done
To thee particularly, and to all the Volsces,
Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may
My surname, Coriolanus: The painful service,
The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood
Shed for my thankless country, are requited
But with that surname; a good memory,
And witness of the malice and displeasure
Which thou should'st bear me: only that name remains;
The cruelty and envy of the people,
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who
Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest;
And suffered me by the voice of slaves to be
Whoop'd out of Rome. Now, this extremity
Hath brought me to thy hearth; Not out of hope,
Mistake me not, to save my life; for if
I had fear'd death, of all the men i' the world
I would have 'voided thee: but in mere spite,
To be full quit of those my banishers,
Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast
A heart of wreak in thee, that will revenge
Thine own particular wrongs, and stop those maims
Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee straight,
And make my misery serve thy turn; so use it,

That my revengeful services may prove
As benefits to thee; for I will fight
Against my canker'd country with the spleen
Of all the under fiends. But if so be
Thou dar'st not this, and that to prove more fortunes
Thou art tir'd, then, in a word, I also am
Longer to live most weary, and present
My throat to thee, and to thy ancient malice:
Which not to cut, would show thee but a fool;
Since I have ever follow'd thee with hate,
Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,
And cannot live but to thy shame, unless
It be to do thee service.

Aufidius.— O Marcius, Marcius,
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart
A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter
Should from yon cloud speak divine things, and say,
'Tis true; I'd not believe them more than thee,
All noble Marcius.—O, let me twine
Mine arms about that body, where against
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke,
And scar'd the moon with splinters! Here I clip
The anvil of my sword; and do contest
As hotly and as nobly with thy love,
As ever in ambitious strength I did
Contend against thy valour.

Led by Coriolanus, the Volscians advance towards Rome, conquering some regions, while others "smilingly revolt." Old Menenius, in the public street, says—

We are all undone, unless
The noble man have mercy.

Cominius.— Who shall ask it?
The tribunes cannot do't for shame; the people
Deserve such pity of him, as the wolf
Does of the shepherds. . . .

Enter a troop of CITIZENS.

Menenius.—Here come the clusters. . . . You are they
That made the air unwholesome, when you cast
Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at
Coriolanus' exile. Now, he's coming;
And not a hair upon a soldier's head,

Which will not prove a whip: as many coxcombs
As you threw caps up will he tumble down,
And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter;
If he could burn us all into one coal,
We have deserv'd it.

Citizen.—'Faith, we hear fearful news.

1 *Citizen.*— For mine own part,
When I said, banish him, I said, 'twas pity.

2 *Citizen.*—And so did I.

3 *Citizen.*—And so did I; and, to say the truth, so did very many of us: That we did, we did for the best; and though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was against our will.

Cominius.—You are goodly things, you voices!

Menenius.— You have made
Good work, you and your cry!—Shall's to the Capitol?

Cominius.—O, aye; what else? [*Exeunt* Cominius *and* Menenius.

Sicinius.—Go, masters, get you home, be not dismay'd;
These are a side, that would be glad to have
This true, which they so seem to fear. Go home,
And show no sign of fear.

1 *Citizen.*—The gods be good to us! Come, masters, let's home. I ever said, we were i' the wrong, when we banished him.

2 *Citizen.*—So did we all. But come, let's home. [*Exeunt* Citizens.

Brutus.—I do not like this news.

Sicinius.—Nor I.

Brutus.—Let's to the Capitol:—'Would, half my wealth
Would buy this for a lie!

Sicinius.— Pray, let us go.

When the exile's conquering army beleaguers Rome, Coriolanus' old companion in arms, Cominius, is sent to make terms with him:—

Cominius.—I urged our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. Coriolanus
He would not answer to: forbade all names;
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had forged himself a name in the fire
Of burning Rome. . . .
I tell you, he does sit in gold, his eye
Red as 'twould burn Rome; and his injury
The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him;
'Twas very faintly he said, *Rise*: dismiss'd me

Thus, with his speechless hand: what he would do,
He sent in writing after me; what he would not,
Bound with an oath, to yield to his conditions;
So that all hope is vain,
Unless his noble mother, and his wife,
Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him
For mercy to his country. Therefore, let's hence,
And with our fair entreaties haste them on.

Menenius is scornfully rejected in the same manner, and not until Volumnia appears on the scene is any trace of humanity shown by Coriolanus. He is boasting of his impenetrable nature, when Volumnia appears with the wife and child of Coriolanus.

Fresh embassies, and suits,
Nor from the state, nor private friends, hereafter
Will I lend ear to. [*Shout within.* Ha! what shout is this?
Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow
In the same time 'tis made? I will not.—

Enter, in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA, *leading young* MARCIUS, VALERIA, *and* ATTENDANTS.

My wife comes foremost; then the honour'd mould
Wherein this trunk was fram'd, and in her hand
The grand-child to her blood. But, out, affection!
All bond and privilege of nature, break!
Let it be virtuous, to be obstinate.—
What is that curt'sy worth? or those doves' eyes,
Which can make gods forsworn?—I melt, and am not
Of stronger earth than others.—My mother bows;
As if Olympus to a molehill should
In supplication nod: and my young boy
Hath an aspect of intercession, which
Great nature cries, *Deny not.*—Let the Volsces
Plough Rome, and harrow Italy: I'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct: but stand,
As if a man were author of himself,
And knew no other kin.

Virgilia.— My lord and husband!

Coriolanus.—These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.

Virgilia.—The sorrow that delivers us thus chang'd,
Makes you think so.

Coriolanus.— Like a dull actor now,
I have forgot my part, and I am out,
Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,
Forgive my tyranny; but do not say,
For that, *Forgive our Romans.*—O, a kiss
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge;
Now by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
I carried from thee, dear; and my true hip
Hath virgin'd it e'er since.—You gods! I prate,
And the most noble mother of the world
Leave unsaluted: Sink, my knee, i' the earth; [*Kneels.*
Of thy deep duty more impression show
Than that of common sons.

Volumnia.— O, stand up blest!
Whilst, with no softer cushion than the flint,
I kneel before thee; and unproperly
Show duty, as mistaken all this while
Between the child and parent. [*Kneels.*

Coriolanus.— What is this?
Your knees to me? to your corrected son?
Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
Fillip the stars; then let the mutinous winds
Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun;
Murd'ring impossibility, to make
What cannot be, slight work.

Volumnia.— Thou art my warrior;
I holp to frame thee. Do you know this lady?

Coriolanus.—The noble sister of Publicola,
The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle,
That's curdied by the frost from purest snow,
And hangs on Dian's temple: Dear Valeria!

Volumnia.—This is a poor epitome of yours,
Which by the interpretation of full time
May show like all yourself.

Coriolanus.— The god of soldiers,
With the consent of supreme Jove, inform
Thy thoughts with nobleness; that thou may'st prove
To shame unvulnerable, and stick i' the wars
Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,
And saving those that eye thee!

Volumnia.— Your knee, sirrah.

Coriolanus.—That's my brave boy.

Volumnia.—Even he, your wife, this lady, and myself,
Are suitors to you.

Coriolanus.— I beseech you, peace:
Or, if you'd ask, remember this before;
The things, I have forsworn to grant, may never
Be held by you denials. Do not bid me
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate
Again with Rome's mechanics:—tell me not
Wherein I seem unnatural: desire not
To allay my rages and revenges, with
Your colder reasons.

Volumnia.— O, no more, no more!
You have said, you will not grant us any thing
For we have nothing else to ask, but that
Which you deny already: yet we will ask;
That, if you fail in our request, the blame
May hang upon your hardness; therefore hear us.

Coriolanus.—Aufidius, and you Volsces, mark; for we'll
Hear nought from Rome in private.—Your request?

Volumnia.—Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment,
And state of bodies would bewray what life
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself,
How more unfortunate than all living women
Are we come hither: since that thy sight, which should
Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts,
Constrains them weep, and shake with fear and sorrow;
Making the mother, wife, and child, to see
The son, the husband, and the father, tearing
His country's bowels out. And to poor we,
Thine enmity's most capital: thou barr'st us
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
That all but we enjoy: for how can we,
Alas! how can we for our country pray,
Whereto we are bound; together with thy victory,
Whereto we are bound? Alack! or we must lose
The country, our dear nurse; or else thy person,
Our comfort in the country. We must find
An evident calamity, though we had
Our wish, which side should win: for either thou
Must, as a foreign recreant, be led
With manacles through our streets, or else
Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin;

And bear the palm, for having bravely shed
Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,
I purpose not to wait on fortune, till
These wars determine: if I cannot persuade thee
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts,
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country, than to tread
(Trust to 't, thou shalt not,) on thy mother's womb,
That brought thee to this world.

Virgilia.— Ay, and on mine,
That brought you forth this boy, to keep your name
Living to time.

Boy.— He shall not tread on me;
I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

Coriolanus.—Not of a woman's tenderness to be,
Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.
I have sat too long. [*Rising.*

Volumnia.— Nay, go not from us thus.
If it were so, that our request did tend
To save the Romans, thereby to destroy
The Volsces whom you serve, you might condemn us,
As poisonous of your honour: No; our suit
Is, that you reconcile them: while the Volsces
May say, *This mercy we have show'd:* the Romans,
This we receiv'd: and each in either side
Give the all-hail to thee, and cry, *Be bless'd*
For making up this peace! Thou know'st, great son,
The end of war's uncertain; but this certain,
That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit
Which thou shalt thereby reap, is such a name,
Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses;
Whose chronicle thus writ,—*The man was noble,*
But with his last attempt he wip'd it out;
Destroy'd his country; and his name remains
To the ensuing age, abhorr'd. Speak to me, son:
Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour,
To imitate the graces of the gods;
To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' the air,
And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt
That should but rive an oak. Why dost not speak?
Think'st thou it honourable for a noble man
Still to remember wrongs?—Daughter, speak you:
He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy:

Perhaps, thy childishness will move him more
Than can our reasons.—There is no man in the world
More bound to his mother; yet here he lets me prate,
Like one i' the stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy;
When she (poor hen!) fond of no second brood,
Has cluck'd thee to the wars, and safely home,
Loaden with honour. Say, my request's unjust,
And spurn me back: But, if it be not so,
Thou art not honest; and the gods will plague thee,
That thou restrain'st from me the duty, which
To a mother's part belongs.—He turns away:
Down, ladies; let us shame him with our knees.
To his surname Coriolanus 'longs more pride,
Than pity to our prayers. Down; An end:
This is the last;—So we will home to Rome,
And die among our neighbours.—Nay, behold us:
This boy, that cannot tell what he would have,
But kneels, and holds up hands, for fellowship,
Does reason our petition with more strength
Than thou hast to deny 't.—Come, let us go:
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother;
His wife is in Corioli, and his child
Like him by chance:—Yet give us our despatch:
I am hush'd until our city be afire,
And then I'll speak a little.

Coriolanus.— O mother, mother!
[*Holding* Volumnia *by the hand, silent.*
What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!
You have won a happy victory to Rome:
But, for your son,—believe it, O, believe it,
Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,
If not most mortal to him. But, let it come;—
Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,
I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,
Were you in my stead, say, would you have heard
A mother less? or granted less, Aufidius?

Aufidius.—I was mov'd withal.

Coriolanus. I dare be sworn, you were;
And, sir, it is no little thing, to make

Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,
What peace you'll make, advise me: for my part,
I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you; and pray you,
Stand to me in this cause.—O mother! wife!

Aufidius.—I am glad, thou hast set thy mercy and thy honour
At difference in thee: out of that I'll work
Myself a former fortune. [*Aside.*

[*The* Ladies *make signs to* Coriolanus.

Coriolanus.— Ay, by and by;

[*To* Volumnia, Virgilia, &c.

But we will drink together; and you shall bear
A better witness back than words, which we,
On like conditions, will have counter-seal'd.
Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve
To have a temple built you: all the swords
In Italy, and her confederate arms,
Could not have made this peace. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—ROME.—A PUBLIC PLACE.

Enter MENENIUS *and* SICINIUS.

Menenius.—See you yond' coign o' the Capitol; yond' corner-stone?

Sicinius.—Why, what of that?

Menenius.—If it be possible for you to displace it with your little finger, there is some hope the ladies of Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with him. . . .

Sicinius.—He loved his mother dearly.

Menenius.—So did he me: and he no more remembers his mother now, than an eight-year-old horse. The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes. When he walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his treading. He is able to pierce a corslet with his eye; talks like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits in his state, as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done, is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god, but eternity, and a heaven to throne in.

Sicinius.—Yes, mercy, if you report him truly.

Menenius.—I paint him in the character. Mark what mercy his mother shall bring from him: There is no more mercy in him, than there is milk in a male tiger; that shall our poor city find: and all this is 'long of you.

Sicinius.—The gods be good unto us!

Menenius.—No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them: and, he returning to break our necks, they respect not us.

Enter a MESSENGER.

Messenger.—Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to your house;
The plebeians have got your fellow-tribune,
And hale him up and down; all swearing, if
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home,
They'll give him death by inches.

Enter another MESSENGER.

Sicinius.— What's the news?
Messenger.—Good news, good news;—The ladies have prevail'd,
The Volscians are dislodg'd, and Marcius gone:
A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,
No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.
Sicinius.— Friend,
Art thou certain this is true? is it most certain?
Messenger.—As certain, as I know the sun is fire:
Where have you lurk'd, that you make doubt of it?
Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide,
As the recomforted through the gates. Why, hark you!
[*Trumpets and hautboys sounded, and drums beaten, all together. Shouting also within.*
The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries, and fifes,
Tabors, and cymbals, and the shouting Romans,
Make the sun dance. Hark you! [*Shouting again.*
Menenius.— This is good news:
I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia
Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,
A city full; of tribunes, such as you,
A sea and land full: You have pray'd well to-day;
This morning, for ten thousand of your throats
I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!
[*Shouting and music.*
Sicinius.—First, the gods bless you for their tidings: next,
Accept my thankfulness.
Messenger.— Sir, we have all
Great cause to give great thanks.
Sicinius.— They are near the city?
Messenger.—Almost at point to enter.
Sicinius.— We will meet them,
And help the joy. [*Going.*

Enter the LADIES, *accompanied by* SENATORS, PATRICIANS, *and* PEOPLE.

1 *Senator.*—Behold our patroness, the life of Rome:

> Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,
> And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before them,
> Unshout the noise that banish'd Marcius.

It would be a superfluity to comment at any length upon the foregoing scene. No praise is needed to commend it.

Nor is it necessary to follow Coriolanus to his death by assassination in Corioli.

His character was not drawn by Shakespeare as an example for imitation, but as one to be avoided.

The study of it would be repulsive but for the sympathies evoked by Volumnia and Virgilia, and the relief afforded by the genuine humanity of Menenius.

As for the citizens, they belonged to the great human family, and Shakespeare was as much at his ease in describing them in Rome as in London.

The production of Timon of Athens is assigned to this period of Shakespeare's life; and it may be convenient to refer here to a fantastic theory that his dramas were produced—not in the order which his own sound judgment suggested and his partners agreed with, but—under the stimulus of his own mental disorder from time to time. With regard to Timon, even Professor Dowden accepts this theory so far as to declare that—

> Shakespeare was interested in the history of Timon, not merely as a dramatic study, and not merely for the sake of moral edification, but because he recognised in the Athenian misanthrope, one whom he had known, an intimate acquaintance, the Timon of Shakespeare's own breast. Shall we hesitate to admit that there was such a Timon in the breast of Shakespeare?

Mr. Sidney Lanier utters a still more melancholy moan:—

> Brutus and Hamlet, these are the two heart-breaking characters which Shakespeare draws at this time. . . . Following upon these

you see in the next year comes Measure for Measure, that wretched slough of a play. Never did the world hear a more dismal business than this plot—all murky with shame and weakness and brutality and low suffering and death and dark questions, so that the strong and saintly Isabella scarcely relieves its oppressive atmosphere. . . . Othello murders his wife for a causeless jealousy; Lear and his daughters and best friends all die in a heap, all the deaths being brought about by one unfortunate blunder of a silly old man; Macbeth murders sleep and loyalty, and his good king, all at a stroke, for ambition; Antony betrays wife and country for lust; Coriolanus turns outlaw for revenge; and Timon twists the neck of the world for misanthropy. These plays are like a mortal outcry of grief. The poor master seems to be wondering, in all this melodious amazement, if the world is really going to be too hard for him, as it was for Brutus, and Hamlet, and Timon. I seem to find the taste of this bitter period in the Sonnets. . . .

In his last work the critic finds some consolation, for he says that then

Shakespeare has undoubtedly emerged from the cold paralyzing doubts of Hamlet into the human tenderness and perfect love and faith of The Tempest. . . . In short, he has learned to manage the Hamlet antagonisms, to adjust the moral oppositions with the same artistic sense of proportion with which we saw him managing and adjusting the verse-oppositions and the figure-oppositions.

One might put the case more clearly and concisely thus —in short it was difficult for Shakespeare to rise to the height of Mr. Sidney Lanier's conceptions; but "at last" Shakespeare reached the required standard. *Risum teneatis, amici?*

Professor Dowden's question, Shall we hesitate to admit that there was such a Timon in the breast of Shakespeare, may be answered as easily with regard to Timon as with regard to Iago, Shylock, Richard III., Iachimo, Don John, or any other base character whom, for dramatic purposes, Shakespeare put upon the stage. Shakespeare's imagination, not his breast, produced them. He had no personal sympathies with their villainies, and generally meted out condign punishment to the villains.

His own imagination was equal to the task of punishing the villainies which the reprobate rank and file of his creation committed. Viewed as a whole, the good prevail, and the bad are smitten to the ground in his mimic world. Had it been otherwise it would be unjust to assume that Shakespeare's sympathies were with the bad; but under existing conditions, when there is almost universal consent as to the wholesomeness of his teaching, it seems wanton to ask Professor Dowden's question, or to sympathize with Mr. Sidney Lanier's mawkish complaint that Shakespeare's own mind was contaminated by the "wretched slough of a play" which portrayed Isabella and Vincentio; by the horrors of the tragedy of Lear, "a silly old man;" by Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, and Timon.

It is wholesome for mankind that there should be many homes free from contamination by passion and crime; but the modest lives which sanctify quiet homes do not furnish the materials which attract audiences to theatres in a metropolis. It is idle to say that this should not be the case. It is the case, and the dramatist must recognize the fact.

Happy is he who, while recognizing it, and stirring the emotions of the auditory, can yet win, as Shakespeare won, the praise of such eminent Christian preachers as Archbishop Trench and Canons Ainger and Farrar for the manner in which he made his teaching conform with the highest principles of morality and the solemn truths of Christianity.

But it is necessary to let Shakespeare's handiwork in the "Timon" tragedy speak for itself.

It was a daring deed to produce a drama in which during two acts the hero is a polite spendthrift, and afterwards claims to " be misanthropos and hate mankind."

Commentators seem to agree in the supposition that in Timon, as in Pericles, Shakespeare was aided by another

writer, and the name of that writer has been confidently stated. This may be the fact, but as both plays were included in the first folio edition of Shakespeare's Plays in 1623, we are, to a certain extent, bound to accept Shakespeare as the author, although he may have had coadjutors.

In the First Scene it is amusing to observe that unnamed characters, Poet and Painter, are made use of to describe the flowing tide of flatterers which beats upon the shore of Timon's patronage.

A HALL IN TIMON'S HOUSE.

Enter POET, PAINTER, JEWELLER, MERCHANT, *and others.*

Poet.—Good day, sir.
Painter.— I am glad you are well.
Poet.—I have not seen you long; How goes the world?
Painter.—It wears, sir, as it grows.
Poet.— Ay, that's well known:
But what particular rarity? what strange,
Which manifold record not matches? See,
Magic of bounty! all these spirits thy power
Hath conjur'd to attend. I know the merchant.
Painter.—I know them both; th' other's a jeweller.
Merchant.—O, 'tis a worthy lord!
Jeweller.— Nay, that's most fix'd.
Merchant.—A most incomparable man; breath'd, as it were,
To an untirable and continuate goodness:
He passes.
Jeweller.— I have a jewel here.
Merchant.—O, pray, let's see't: for the lord Timon, sir?
Poet.—When we for recompense have praised the vile,
It stains the glory in that happy verse
Which aptly sings the good.
Jeweller.—If he will touch the estimate: But, for that——
Merchant.— 'Tis a good form.
[*Looking at the jewel.*
Jeweller.—And rich: here is a water, look you.
Painter.—You are rapt, sir, in some work, some dedication
To the great lord.

Poet.— A thing slipp'd idly from me.
Our poesy is as a gum, which oozes
From whence 'tis nourished: The fire i'the flint
Shows not, till it be struck; our gentle flame
Provokes itself, and, like the current, flies
Each bound it chafes. What have you there?
Painter.—A picture, sir.—And when comes your book forth?
Poet.—Upon the heels of my presentment, sir.
Let's see your piece.
Painter.— 'Tis a good piece.
Poet.—So 'tis: this comes off well and excellent.
Painter.—Indifferent.
Poet.— Admirable: How this grace
Speaks his own standing! what a mental power
This eye shoots forth! how big imagination
Moves in this lip! to the dumbness of the gesture
One might interpret.
Painter.—It is a pretty mocking of the life.
Here is a touch; is't good?
Poet.— I'll say of it,
It tutors nature: artificial strife
Lives in these touches, livelier than life.

Enter certain SENATORS, *and pass over.*

Painter.—How this lord's follow'd!
Poet.—The senators of Athens:—Happy man!
Painter.—Look, more!
Poet.—You see this confluence, this great flood of visitors.
I have, in this rough work, shap'd out a man,
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug
With amplest entertainment: My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax: no levell'd malice
Infects one comma in the course I hold;
But flies an eagle flight, bold, and forth on,
Leaving no tract behind.
Painter.—How shall I understand you?
Poet.— I'll unbolt to you.
You see how all conditions, how all minds,
(As well of glib and slippery creatures, as
Of grave and austere quality,) tender down
Their services to lord Timon: his large fortune,
Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,

Subdues and properties to his love and tendance
All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-fac'd flatterer
To Apemantus, that few things loves better
Than to abhor himself: even he drops down
The knee before him, and returns in peace
Most rich in Timon's nod.

Painter.— I saw them speak together.

Poet.—Sir, I have upon a high and pleasant hill,
Feign'd Fortune to be thron'd: The base o' the mount
Is rank'd with all deserts, all kind of natures,
That labour on the bosom of this sphere
To propagate their states: amongst them all,
Whose eyes are on this sovereign lady fix'd,
One do I personate of lord Timon's frame,
Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her;
Whose present grace to present slaves and servants
Translates his rivals.

Painter.— 'Tis conceiv'd to scope.
This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,
With one man beckon'd from the rest below,
Bowing his head against the steepy mount
To climb his happiness, would be well express'd
In our condition.

Poet.— Nay, sir, but hear me on:
All those which were his fellows but of late,
(Some better than his value,) on the moment
Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,
Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear,
Make sacred even his stirrup, and through him
Drink the free air.

Painter.— Ay, marry, what of these?

Poet.—When Fortune, in her shift and change of mood,
Spurns down her late belov'd, all his dependants,
Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top,
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

Painter.—'Tis common:
A thousand moral paintings I can show,
That shall demonstrate these quick blows of fortune
More pregnantly than words. Yet you do well,
To show lord Timon, that mean eyes have seen
The foot above the head.

Trumpets sound. Enter TIMON, *attended; the* SERVANT *of* VENTIDIUS *talking with him.*

Timon.— Imprison'd is he, say you?
Ventidius' Servant.—Ay, my good lord: five talents is his debt;
His means most short, his creditors most strait:
Your honourable letter he desires
To those have shut him up; which failing,
Periods his comfort.
Timon.— Noble Ventidius! Well;
I am not of that feather, to shake off
My friend when he must need me. I do know him
A gentleman, that well deserves a help,
Which he shall have: I'll pay the debt, and free him.
Ventidius' Servant.—Your lordship ever binds him.
Timon.—Commend me to him: I will send his ransom;
And, being enfranchis'd, bid him come to me:—
'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
But to support him after.—Fare you well.
Ventidius' Servant.—All happiness to your honour! [*Exit.*

In Timon, Apemantus, described as a "churlish philosopher," is made to fill the office of "jester," of which Shakespeare made so much use.

Enter APEMANTUS.

Jeweller.—We will bear, with your lordship.
Merchant.— He'll spare none.
Timon.—Good morrow to thee, gentle Apemantus!
Apemantus.—Till I be gentle, stay thou for thy good morrow;
When thou art Timon's dog, and these knaves honest.
Timon.—Why dost thou call them knaves? thou know'st them not.
Apemantus.—Are they not Athenians?
Timon.—Yes.
Apemantus.—Then I repent not.
Jeweller.—You know me, Apemantus.
Apemantus.—Thou knowest, I do; I call'd thee by thy name.
Timon.—Thou art proud, Apemantus.
Apemantus.—Of nothing so much, as that I am not like Timon.
Timon.—Whither art going?
Apemantus.—To knock out an honest Athenian's brains.
Timon.—That's a deed thou'lt die for.
Apemantus.—Right, if doing nothing be death by the law.

Timon.—How likest thou this picture, Apemantus?

Apemantus.—The best, for the innocence.

Timon.—Wrought he not well, that painted it?

Apemantus.—He wrought better, that made the painter; and yet he's but a filthy piece of work.

Painter.—You are a dog.

Apemantus.—Thy mother's of my generation; What's she, if I be a dog?

Timon.—Wilt dine with me, Apemantus?

Apemantus.—No; I eat not lords.

Timon.—An' thou should'st, thoud'st anger ladies.

Apemantus.—O, they eat lords; so they come by great bellies.

Timon.—That's a lascivious apprehension.

Apemantus.—So thou apprehend'st it: Take it for thy labour.

Timon.—How dost thou like this jewel, Apemantus?

Apemantus.—Not so well as plain-dealing, which will not cost a man a doit.

Timon.—What dost thou think 'tis worth?

Apemantus.—Not worth my thinking.—How now, poet?

Poet.—How now, philosopher?

Apemantus.—Thou liest.

Poet.—Art not one?

Apemantus.—Yes.

Poet.—Then I lie not.

Apemantus.—Art not a poet?

Poet.—Yes.

Apemantus.—Then thou liest: look in thy last work, where thou hast feign'd him a worthy fellow.

Poet.—That's not feign'd, he is so.

Apemantus.—Yes, he is worthy of thee, and to pay thee for thy labour: He, that loves to be flattered, is worthy o' the flatterer. Heavens, that I were a lord!

Timon.—What would'st do then, Apemantus?

Apemantus.—Even as Apemantus does now, hate a lord with my heart.

Timon.—What, thyself?

Apemantus.—Ay.

Timon.—Wherefore?

Apemantus.—That I had no angry wit to be a lord.—Art not thou a merchant?

Merchant.—Ay, Apemantus.

Apemantus.—Traffic counfound thee, if the gods will not!

Merchant.—If traffic do it, the gods do it.
Apemantus.—Traffic's thy god, and thy god confound thee!

Trumpets sound. Enter a SERVANT.

Timon.—What trumpet's that?
Servant.— 'Tis Alcibiades, and
Some twenty horse, all of companionship.
Timon.—Pray, entertain them; give them guide to us.—
[*Exeunt some* Attendants.

Early in the Second Act Timon's honest steward, Flavius, at last brings home to his wasteful master that his possessions have been squandered, and that no Athenian beggar is poorer than the great Lord Timon. He reminds him that he had often against "the authority of manners prayed him to hold his hand more close," but in vain.

Timon.—Let all my land be sold.
Flavius.—'Tis all engaged, some forfeited and gone. . . .
Timon.—To Lacedæmon did my land extend.
Flavius.—O, my good lord, the world is but a word;
Were it all yours, to give it in a breath,
How quickly were it gone!
Timon.— You tell me true.
Flavius.—If you suspect my husbandry, or falsehood,
Call me before the exactest auditors,
And set me on the proof. So the gods bless me,
When all our offices have been oppress'd
With riotous feeders: when our vaults have wept
With drunken spilth of wine; when every room
Hath blaz'd with lights, and bray'd with minstrelsy;
I have retir'd me to a wasteful cock,
And set mine eyes at flow.
Timon.— Pr'ythee, no more.
Flavius.—Heavens, have I said, the bounty of this lord!
How many prodigal bits have slaves, and peasants,
This night englutted! Who is not Timon's?
What heart, head, sword, force, means, but is lord Timon's?
Great Timon, noble, worthy, royal Timon?
Ah! when the means are gone, that buy this praise,
The breath is gone whereof this praise is made:
Feast-won, fast-lost; one cloud of winter showers,
These flies are couch'd.

Timon.— Come, sermon me no further:
No villainous bounty yet hath pass'd my heart;
Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given.
Why dost thou weep? Canst thou the conscience lack,
To think I shall lack friends? Secure thy heart;
If I would broach the vessels of my love, . . .
And try the argument of hearts by borrowing,
Men, and men's fortunes, could I frankly use,
As I can bid thee speak.
Flavius.— Assurance bless your thoughts!
Timon.—And, in some sort, these wants of mine are crown'd,
That I account them blessings; for by these
Shall I try friends: You shall perceive how you
Mistake my fortunes; I am wealthy in my friends,
Within there, ho!—Flaminius! Servilius!

Lucullus, one of those made fat by Timon's bounty. tells Flaminius to lie to Timon and say he saw him not, "This is no time to lend money . . . here's three solidaires for thee. Good boy, wink at me, and say thou sawest me not."

We may infer from the retort of Flaminius that Timon's disposition had been genuinely kind and not affected, for he throws back the money, exclaiming, "Is't possible the world should so much differ, and we alive that lived? Fly, damned baseness, to him that worships thee."

Another casuistical friend, Sempronius, grumbles at being solicited so soon. Why had not Timon tried Lucullus or Lucius first? Being told that they have been tried and "found base metal," he, in no way abashed, complains that he was not first wooed.

For, in my conscience, I was the first man
That e'er received gift from him;
And does he think so backwardly of me now,
That I'll requite it last? No; so it may prove
An argument of laughter to the rest,—
And amongst the lords be thought a fool.
I had rather than the worth of thrice the sum
He'd sent to me first,—but for my mind's sake;

I'd such a courage to do him good. But now return,
And with their faint reply this answer join,
Who bates mine honour, shall not know my coin. [*Exit.*

Servilius.—Excellent! Your lordship's a goodly villain. . . How fairly this lord strives to appear foul! takes virtuous copies to be wicked. . . . This was my lord's best hope; now all are fled.

Timon, having learned by adversity to understand something of the world in which he played so foolish a part, makes his astounded steward Flavius invite all his old friends again to a feast; and the halcyon creatures assemble accordingly, and all the dishes being covered, Timon addresses his guests:

Sit, sit. The gods require our thanks.

You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness. For your own gifts, make yourselves praised: but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised. Lend to each man enough, that one need not lend to another: for, were your godheads to borrow of men, men would forsake the gods. Make the meat be beloved, more than the man that gives it. Let no assembly of twenty be without a score of villains: If there sit twelve women at the table, let a dozen of them be —as they are. The rest of your fees, O gods,—the senators of Athens, together with the common lag of people,—what is amiss in them, you gods, make suitable for destruction. For these my present friends,—as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing they are welcome.

Uncover, dogs, and lap.

[*The dishes uncovered are full of warm water.*

Some speak.—What does his lordship mean?

Some other.—I know not.

Timon.—May you a better feast never behold,
You knot of mouth-friends! smoke, and luke-warm water
Is your perfection. This is Timon's last;
Who, stuck and spangled you with flatteries,
Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces
[*Throwing water in their faces.*
Your reeking villainy. Live loath'd, and long,
Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies,
Cap and knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks!

Of man, and beast, the infinite malady
Crust you quite o'er!—What, dost thou go?
Soft, take thy physic first—thou too,—and thou;—
[*Throws the dishes at them, and drives them out.*
Stay, I will lend thee money, borrow none.—
What, all in motion? Henceforth be no feast,
Whereat a villain's not a welcome guest.
Burn, house; sink, Athens! henceforth hated be
Of Timon, man, and all humanity. [*Exit.*

Timon is next seen outside of the wall of Athens, and his last words to the city of his luxurious days are—

Nothing I'll bear from thee,
But nakedness, thou detestable town!
Take thou that, too, with multiplying bans!
Timon will to the woods; where he shall find
The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.
The gods confound (hear me, you good gods all,)
The Athenians both within and out that wall!
And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow
To the whole race of mankind, high and low!
Amen.

Some critics, having accepted the tradition that Shakespeare had a coadjutor in writing Timon, have also singled out passages to confirm their surmise. One speech uttered by one of Timon's servants we may safely ascribe to Shakespeare himself—

Second Servant.— As we do turn our backs
From our companion thrown into his grave,
So his familiars to his buried fortunes
Slink all away; leave their false vows with him,
Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,
A dedicated beggar to the air,
With his disease of all-shunned poverty,
Walks, like contempt, alone."

There are many interesting episodes in the drama, when (after Timon in digging for roots has found a hoard of gold) he is besieged by beggars of various callings, who welcome his maledictions so long as they can obtain his gold.

Critics who accept the tradition that Shakespeare had help from others in the composition of Timon concur in believing that all which comes from the mouth of Timon, of Apemantus, and some other characters, was Shakespeare's work. It is comparatively safe, therefore, to cite passages in which Timon and Apemantus are colloquists.

In the Fourth Act Timon has just got rid of Alcibiades and his train, when Apemantus comes on the scene.

Timon.—More man? Plague! plague!
Apemantus.—I was directed hither; men report
Thou dost affect my manners, and dost use them.
Timon.—'Tis then, because thou dost not keep a dog,
Whom I would imitate. Consumption catch thee!
Apemantus.—This is in thee a nature but affected;
A poor unmanly melancholy, sprung
From change of fortune. Why this spade? this place?
This slave-like habit? and these looks of care?
Thy flatterers yet wear silk, drink wine, lie soft;
Hug their diseased perfumes, and have forgot
That ever Timon was. Shame not these woods,
By putting on the cunning of a carper.
Be thou a flatterer now, and seek to thrive
By that which has undone thee: hinge thy knee,
And let his very breath, whom thou'lt observe,
Blow off thy cap; praise his most vicious strain,
And call it excellent: thou wast told thus:
Thou gav'st thine ears, like tapsters, that bid welcome,
To knaves, and all approachers: 'tis most just,
That thou turn rascal; hadst thou wealth again,
Rascals should hav't. Do not assume my likeness.
Timon.—Were I like thee, I'd throw away myself.
Apemantus.—Thou hast cast away thyself, being like thyself;
A madman so long, now a fool: What, think'st
That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,
Will put thy shirt on warm? Will these moss'd trees,
That have out-liv'd the eagle, page thy heels,
And skip when thou point'st out? Will the cold brook,
Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste,
To cure thy o'ernight's surfeit? call the creatures
Whose naked natures live in all the spite

Of wreakful heaven; whose bare unhoused trunks,
To the conflicting elements exposed,
Answer mere nature,—bid them flatter thee;
O! thou shalt find——

Timon.— A fool of thee: Depart.

Apemantus.—I love thee better now than e'er I did.

Timon.—I hate thee worse.

Apemantus.— Why?

Timon.— Thou flatter'st misery.

Apemantus.—I flatter not; but say, thou art a caitiff.

Timon.—Why dost thou seek me out?

Apemantus.— To vex thee.

Timon.—Always a villain's office, or a fool's.
Dost please thyself in 't?

Apemantus.— Ay.

Timon.— What! a knave too?

Apemantus.—If thou didst put this sour-cold habit on
To castigate thy pride, 'twere well: but thou
Dost it enforcedly; thou'dst courtier be again,
Wert thou not beggar. Willing misery
Outlives incertain pomp, is crown'd before:
The one is filling still, never complete;
The other, at high wish: best state, contentless,
Hath a distracted and most wretched being,
Worse than the worst, content.
Thou should'st desire to die, being miserable.

Timon.—Not by his breath, that is more miserable.
Thou art a slave, whom Fortune's tender arm . . .
With favour never clasp'd; but bred a dog.
Hadst thou, like us, from our first swath, proceeded
The sweet degrees that this brief world affords
To such as may the passive drugs of it
Freely command, thou would'st have plung'd thyself
In general riot; melted down thy youth
In different beds of lust; and never learn'd
The icy precepts of respect, but follow'd
The sugar'd game before thee. But myself,
Who had the world as my confectionary,
The mouths, the tongues, the eyes, and hearts of men
At duty, more than I could frame employment;
That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves
Do on the oak, have with one winter's brush

Fall'n from their boughs, and left me open, bare
For every storm that blows: I, to bear this,
That never knew but better, is some burden;
Thy nature did commence in sufferance, time
Hath made thee hard in 't. Why should'st thou hate men?
They never flattered thee: what hast thou given? . . .
Poor rogue hereditary. Hence, be gone!
If thou had not been born the worst of men,
Thou hadst been a knave and flatterer.

Apemantus.— Art thou proud yet?

Timon.— Aye, that I am not thee.

Apemantus.— I that I was no prodigal.

Timon.—What would'st thou do with the world if it lay in thy power?

Apemantus—Give it the beasts, to be rid of the men.

Timon.—Would'st thou have thyself fall in the confusion of men, and remain a beast with the beasts?

Apemantus.—Ay, Timon.

Timon.—A beastly ambition, which the gods grant thee to attain to! If thou wert the lion, the fox would beguile thee; if thou wert the lamb, the fox would eat thee; if thou wert the fox, the lion would suspect thee, when peradventure thou wert accused by the ass; if thou wert the ass, thy dulness would torment thee, and still thou livest but as a breakfast to the wolf; if thou wert the wolf, thy greediness would afflict thee, and oft thou should'st hazard thy life for thy dinner. . . . What beast could'st thou be, that were not subject to a beast? and what a beast art thou already, that seest not thy loss in transformation! . . .

Apemantus.—When I know not what else to do, I'll come and see thee again.

Timon.—When there is nothing living but thee, thou shalt be welcome. I had rather be a beggar's dog than Apemantus. . . .

Thieves visit him, hoping to rob him of gold which he found while digging for roots. He gives them gold, saying:

There's more gold. Cut throats,
All that you meet are thieves. To Athens go,
Break open shops; nothing can you steal,
But thieves do lose it. Steal not less, for this
I give you; and gold confound you howsoever!
Amen.

One of the thieves ejaculates, "He has almost charmed me out of my profession by praising it."

Then follows the one gleam of light which illuminates Timon's beclouded condition. Flavius, his upright steward while Timon was rich, comes "to serve him in his misery."

Flavius.—My dearest master.

Timon.—Away! what art thou?

Flavius.—Have you forgot me, sir?

Timon.—Why dost ask that? I have forgot all men; then if thou grant'st thou art a man, I have forgot thee.

Flavius.—An honest poor servant of yours.

Timon.—Then I know thee not: I never had honest man about me, I; all I kept were knaves to serve in meat to villains.

Flavius.—The gods are witness; ne'er did poor steward wear a truer grief, for his undone lord than mine eyes for you.

Timon.—What, dost thou weep? come nearer; then I love thee,
Because thou art a woman, and disclaim'st
Flinty mankind; whose eyes do never give,
But thorough lust, and laughter. Pity's sleeping:
Strange times, that weep with laughing, not with weeping!

Flavius.—I beg of you to know me, good my lord,
To accept my grief, and whilst this poor wealth lasts,
To entertain me as your steward still.

Timon.—Had I a steward so true, so just, and now
So comfortable? It almost turns
My dangerous nature wild. Let me behold
Thy face.—Surely this man was born of woman.—
Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,
Perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim
One honest man,—mistake me not,—but one;
No more, I pray,—and he is a steward.—
How fain would I have hated all mankind,
And thou redeem'st thyself: But all, save thee,
I fell with curses.
Methinks, thou art more honest now, than wise;
For, by oppressing and betraying me,
Thou might'st have sooner got another service:
For many so arrive at second masters,
Upon their first lord's neck. But tell me true,
(For I must ever doubt, though ne'er so sure,)

Is not thy kindness subtle, covetous,
If not a usuring kindness; and as rich men deal gifts,
Expecting in return twenty for one?

Flavius.—No, my most worthy master, in whose breast
Doubt and suspect, alas, are plac'd too late;
You should have fear'd false times, when you did feast:
Suspect still comes where an estate is least.
That which I show, heaven knows, is merely love,
Duty and zeal to your unmatched mind,
Care of your food and living: and, believe it,
My most honour'd lord,
For any benefit that points to me,
Either in hope, or present, I'd exchange
For this one wish, That you had power and wealth
To requite me, by making rich yourself.

Timon.—Look thee, 'tis so!—Thou singly honest man,
Here, take:—the gods out of my misery
Have sent thee treasure. Go, live rich, and happy:
But thus condition'd; Thou shalt build from men;
Hate all, curse all: show charity to none;
But let the famish'd flesh silde from the bone,
Ere thou relieve the beggar: give to dogs
What thou deny'st to men; let prisons swallow them,
Debts wither them: Be men like blasted woods,
And may diseases lick up their false bloods!
And so, farewell, and thrive.

Flavius.— O, let me stay,
And comfort you, my master.

Timon.— If thou hat'st
Curses, stay not; fly, whilst thou'rt bless'd and free;
Ne'er see thou man, and let me ne'er see thee.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Poet, painter, senators, who hear of Timon's gold, resort to him, but vainly strive to excite his sympathy.

He dies by the sea-shore, and his epitaph is spoken by Alcibiades, to whom the rough "insculpture," carried by a soldier, has been brought—

Alcibiades [*reads*].—"Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft.
Seek not my name! A plague consume you wicked caitiffs left!

Here lie I Timon; who, alive, all living men did hate:
Pass by, and curse thy fill; but pass and stay not here thy gait."
These well express in thee thy latter spirits:
Though thou abhorr'dst in us our human griefs,
Scorn'dst our brain's flow, and those our droplets which
From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye
On thy low grave, on faults forgiven. Dead
Is noble Timon; of whose memory
Hereafter more.—Bring me into your city,
And I will use the olive with my sword:
Make war breed peace; make peace stint war; make each
Prescribe to other, as each other's leech.
Let our drums strike.

More space has been devoted in these pages to the tragedy of Timon than its popularity might seem to demand, but its character is such as to preclude general popularity in its representation. It is essentially the analysis by Shakespeare of the workings of a disordered mind. But he did not invent the situation. History had recorded the broad facts of Timon's wealth and extravagance, his downfall, misanthropy, and abject death. Shakespeare's imagination supplied materials for tracing the stages of the catastrophe; and to trace the work of Shakespeare's imagination is the object of this brief essay.

The play, Pericles, Prince of Tyre, was not included amongst Shakespeare's Plays as published in the First Folio in 1623 by his partners and "fellows," Heminge and Condell.

It is accepted as a fact that he had coadjutors in composing it, and in 1609 it was printed (piratically) as by "William Shakespeare," and described in the advertisement as his, and as "much admired."

It was popular enough to command a second edition in the same year. George Wilkins, already known as a dramatic writer, has been deemed the coadjutor with

Shakespeare in the production of Pericles, but certain passages were by common consent ascribed to Shakespeare. In this brief sketch of Shakespeare's productions it is perhaps superfluous, if not unadvisable, to treat as Shakespeare's a work which his friends did not include in the First Folio.

About the authorship of Cymbeline there could be no doubt. None but Shakespeare could have produced it.

The character of Imogen has been "the chief favourite" of many eminent women who have adorned the literary world and thrilled the theatre. Lady Theodore Martin, writing to Miss Swanwick in 1882, said:—

> All words—such at least as are at my command, seem inadequate to express what I felt about her from my earliest years, not to speak of all that the experiences of my woman's heart and of human life have taught me since of the matchless truth and beauty with which Shakespeare has invested her. In drawing her he has made his masterpiece; and of all heroines of poetry or romance, who can be named beside her?

With the praise of Imogen Lady Martin filled nearly fifty pages in her work on "Shakespeare's Female Characters;" and some space should be allotted to the character of Imogen in any review, however brief, of Shakespeare's work.

As was frequently his custom, Shakespeare based his plot in Cymbeline upon an old tradition, which was in this case furnished by Holinshed; but in Cymbeline, as in Lear and in Macbeth, having taken a main historical fact, or a tradition accepted as a fact, he proceeded to invent other characters and facts suitable for the presentment of his own ideas in working out his plot. A mutilated torso was before him, and he invested it with limbs, and enabled it to take part with other characters (products of his own imagination) in working out his plot, the scene of

which is for the most part in Britain, then a Roman province, before the dawn of Christianity.

The barbarity of the times in which the events of the drama occur, would at first sight appear unfavourable to the development of the character of a heroine whom so many of Shakespeare's admirers deem the most perfect type of womanhood. Professor Dowden speaks of her as a name for "gracious powers which extend forgiveness to men," as "the reverse of grave and massive in character, but who has an exquisite vivacity of feeling and of fancy, and a heart pure, quick, and ardent. . . . And in like manner she forgives, not with self-possession and a broad tranquil joy in the accomplished fact, but through a pure ardour, an exquisite eagerness of love and of delight." Mr. Sidney Lee calls her the "crown and flower of Shakespeare's conception of tender and artless womanhood."

On the creation of such a character, a few words may well be bestowed in these pages.

Cymbeline, her father, has married a second time, and Imogen's step-mother, the Queen, is false, intriguing, and malignant; hating Imogen, and plotting for the exaltation of Cloten, her own son by a former marriage, before her wiles enabled her to marry Cymbeline, and become the *dura noverca* to Imogen. It is, however, a part of her schemes for the aggrandisement of the lout Cloten, to marry him to Imogen, and thus secure the sovereignty of Britain for Cloten, under her own guidance. Two brothers of Imogen had mysteriously disappeared in their infancy, and were not known to be alive. They had, however, been kidnapped by an old British general, Belarius, who, ill-treated by Cymbeline, stole the children (Guiderius and Arviragus), and, in a mountain retreat in Wales, "trained them up to such arts as he could put into them."

With this mention of the condition of affairs at Cym-

beline's court, we may proceed to consider Imogen's character.

In the first scene we are told of her condition by a gentleman of Cymbeline's court.

> His daughter, and the heir of his kingdom, whom
> He purposed to his wife's sole son—a widow,
> That late he married—hath referred herself
> Unto a poor but worthy gentleman: she's wedded,
> Her husband banish'd; she imprison'd: all
> In outward sorrow: though, I think, the king
> Is touched at very heart.
>
> 2 *Gentleman.*— None but the king?
>
> 1 *Gentleman.*—He that hath lost her too: So is the queen,
> That most desired the match; but not a courtier,
> Although they wear their faces to the bent
> Of the king's looks, hath a heart that is not
> Glad at the thing they scowl at.
>
> 2 *Gentleman.*— And why so?
>
> 1 *Gentleman.*—He that hath missed the princess is a thing
> Too bad for bad report: and he that hath her,
> I mean that married her,—alack, good man!—
> And therefore banished, is a creature such
> As, to seek through the regions of the earth
> For one his like, there would be something failing
> In him that should compare. . . .

The farewell of Imogen and Posthumus is given to us:—

> *Imogen.*— Look here, love:
> This diamond was my mother's: take it, heart;
> And keep it till you woo another wife,
> When Imogen is dead.
>
> *Posthumus.*— How? how? Another?
> You gentle gods, give me but this I have,
> And sear up my embracements with a next
> In bonds of death. [*Putting on the ring.*
> Remain, remain thou here,
> While sense can keep it on! And sweetest, fairest,
> As I my poor self did exchange for you,
> To your so infinite loss, so in our trifles,

I still win of you: for my sake wear this;
It is a manacle of love; I'll place it
Upon this fairest prisoner. [*Putting a bracelet on her arm.*

Imogen.—O, the gods! When shall we see again?

Enter CYMBELINE.

Posthumus.— Alack, the king!

Cymbeline.—Thou basest thing, avoid! hence from my sight!
If after this command thou fraught the court
With thy unworthiness, thou diest: away!
Thou'rt poison to my blood.

Posthumus. The gods protect you,
And bless the good remainders of the court!
I am gone.

Imogen.— There cannot be a pinch in death
More sharp than this is.

Cymbeline.— O disloyal thing,
That should'st repair my youth, thou heap'st
A year's age on me!

Imogen.— I beseech you, sir,
Harm not yourself with your vexation:
I am senseless of your wrath; a touch more rare
Subdues all pangs, all fears.

Cymbeline.— Past grace? obedience?

Imogen.—Past hope and in despair; that way, past grace.

Cymbeline.—That might'st have had the sole son of my queen!

Imogen.—O, blest that I might not! I chose an eagle,
And did avoid a puttock.

Cymbeline.—Thou took'st a beggar; would'st have made my throne
A seat for baseness.

Imogen.— No; I rather added
A lustre to it.

Cymbeline.— O! thou vile one.

Imogen.— Sir,
It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus:
You bred him as my playfellow, and he is
A man worth any woman, overbuys me
Almost the sum he pays.

Cymbeline.— What! art thou mad?

Imogen.—Almost, sir; heaven restore me! Would I were
A neat-herd's daughter, and my Leonatus,
Our neighbour-shepherd's son!

Re-enter QUEEN.

Cymbeline.— Thou foolish thing!
They were again together: you have done
Not after our command. Away with her,
And pen her up. . . . Nay, let her languish,
A drop of blood a day; and, being aged,
Die of this folly.

Imogen afterwards questions Pisanio as to the manner of Posthumus' departure.

Imogen.—I would thou grew'st unto the shores o' the haven,
And question'dst every sail: if he should write,
And I not have it, 'twere a paper lost,
As offer'd mercy is. What was the last
That he spake to thee?
Pisanio.— 'Twas, *His queen, his queen!*
Imogen.—Then wav'd his handkerchief?
Pisanio.— And kiss'd it, madam.
Imogen.—Senseless linen! happier therein than I!—
And that was all?
Pisanio.— No, madam; for so long
As he could make me with this eye or ear
Distinguish him from others, he did keep
The deck, with glove, or hat, or handkerchief,
Still waving, as the fits and stirs of his mind
Could best express how slow his soul sail'd on,
How swift his ship.
Imogen.— Thou should'st have made him
As little as a crow, or less, ere left
To after-eye him.
Pisanio.— Madam, so I did.
Imogen.—I would have broke mine eye-strings; crack'd them, but
To look upon him; till the diminution
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle;
Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from
The smallness of a gnat to air; and then
Have turn'd mine eye, and wept.—But, good Pisanio,
When shall we hear from him?
Pisanio.— Be assur'd, madam,
With his next vantage.
Imogen.—I did not take my leave of him, but had
Most pretty things to say: ere I could tell him,

How I would think on him, at certain hours,
Such thoughts, and such; or I could make him swear
The shes of Italy should not betray
Mine interest, and his honour; or have charg'd him,
At the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,
To encounter me with orisons, for then
I am in heaven for him; or ere I could
Give him that parting kiss, which I had set
Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father,
And, like the tyrannous breathing of the north,
Shakes all our buds from growing.

In another scene Imogen thus soliloquises:—

A father cruel and a step-dame false;
A foolish suitor to a wedded lady,
That hath her husband banished: O, that husband!
My supreme crown of grief! and those repeated
Vexations of it! Had I been thief-stolen,
As my two brothers, happy! but most miserable
Is the desire that's glorious: blest be those,
How mean soe'er, that have their honest wills,
Which seasons comfort.

Meanwhile Posthumus has made a foolish wager in Rome with an Italian, Iachimo, who laughs at Posthumus, on account of his devotion to Imogen, and, provided with a letter of introduction to her, visits Cymbeline's court.

In his interview with Imogen he is presumptuous, but is speedily abashed by her prompt correction, and recants his charges against Posthumus which she had resented with commanding dignity. But he returns to Rome with simular proofs, which, though false, beguile Posthumus into a belief in Imogen's inconstancy.

He has stolen the bracelet, the parting gift of Posthumus to Imogen; and swears that she gave it to him:— "I see her yet; her pretty action did outsell her gift, and yet enriched it too." The duped Posthumus thereupon surrenders to him, in terms of the foolish wager, the ring which had been Imogen's parting gift to Posthumus, and

which at the close of the drama is to minister in establishing the truth and restoring the happiness of Imogen and her duped husband. He, meanwhile, enraged beyond measure, writes to his faithful servant, Pisanio, who has remained at Cymbeline's court, and directs him to beguile Imogen with false pretences to go to Milford Haven to meet Posthumus. And Pisanio is directed to accompany her to Milford Haven and slay her there as disloyal.

The loyal Pisanio exclaims:—

O, master! what a strange infection
Is fall'n into thy ear! What false Italian,
As poisonous-tongued as handed, hath prevailed
On thy too ready hearing? Disloyal! No:
She's punished for her truth, and undergoes,
More goddess-like than wife-like, such assaults
As would take in some virtue. O! my master!
Thy mind to her is now as low as were
Thy fortunes. How! that I should murder her?
Upon the love and truth and vows which I
Have made to thy command? I, her? her blood?
If it be so to do good service, never
Let me be counted serviceable. How look I,
That I should seem to lack humanity,
So much as this fact comes to? *Do't: The letter* [*Reading.*
That I have sent her, by her own command
Shall give thee opportunity: O damn'd paper!
Black as the ink that's on thee! Senseless bauble,
Art thou a feodary for this act, and look'st
So virgin-like without? Lo, here she comes.

Enter IMOGEN.

I am ignorant in what I am commanded.

Imogen.—How now, Pisanio?

Pisanio.—Madam, here is a letter from my lord.

Imogen.—Who? thy lord? that is my lord? Leonatus?
O, learn'd indeed were that astronomer,
That knew the stars, as I his characters;
He'd lay the future open.—You good gods,
Let what is here contain'd relish of love,
Of my lord's health, of his content,—yet not,

That we two are asunder, let that grieve him,—
Some griefs are med'cinable; that is one of them,
For it doth physic love;—of his content,
All but in that!—Good wax, thy leave:—Bless'd be,
You bees, that make these locks of counsel! Lovers,
And men in dangerous bonds, pray not alike;
Though forfeiters you cast in prison, yet
You clasp young Cupid's tables.—Good news, gods! [*Reads.*

"Justice, and your father's wrath, should he take me in his dominion, could not be so cruel to me, as you, O the dearest of creatures, would even renew me with your eyes. Take notice, that I am in Cambria, at Milford-Haven: What your own love will, out of this, advise you, follow. So, he wishes you all happiness, that remains loyal to his vow, and your, increasing in love." Leonatus Posthumus.

O, for a horse with wings!—Hear'st thou, Pisanio?
He is at Milford-Haven: Read, and tell me
How far 'tis thither. If one of mean affairs
May plod it in a week, why may not I
Glide thither in a day?—Then, true Pisanio,
Who long'st like me, to see thy lord; who long'st,—
O, let me 'bate,—but not like me:—yet long'st,—
But in a fainter kind:—O, not like me;
For mine's beyond beyond; say, and speak thick,
(Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing,
To the smothering of the sense,) how far it is
To this same blessed Milford: and, by the way,
Tell me how Wales was made so happy, as
To inherit such a haven: but, first of all,
How we may steal from hence; and, for the gap
That we shall make in time, from our hence-going,
And our return, to excuse:—but first, how get hence:
Why should excuse be born or e'er begot?
We'll talk of that hereafter. Pr'ythee, speak,
How many score of miles may we well ride
'Twixt hour and hour?

Pisanio.— One score, 'twixt sun and sun,
Madam, 's enough for you; and too much too.

Imogen.—Why, one that rode to his execution, man,
Could never go so slow: I have heard of riding wagers,
Where horses have been nimbler than the sands
That run i' the clock's behalf:—But this is foolery;
Go, bid my woman feign a sickness; say

She'll home to her father: and provide me, presently,
A riding suit; no costlier than would fit
A franklin's housewife.

Pisanio.— Madam, you're best consider.

Imogen.—I see before me, man; nor here, nor here,
Nor what ensues; but have a fog in them,
That I cannot look through. Away, I pr'ythee;
Do as I bid thee: There's no more to say;
Accessible is none but Milford way. [*Exeunt.*

Thus, through a despicable plot against her life, is Imogen to become acquainted with her brothers, who were kidnapped in their infancy by Belarius, to whom the next scene introduces us.

SCENE III.—WALES: A MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY, WITH A CAVE.

Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, *and* ARVIRAGUS.

Belarius.—A goodly day not to keep house, with such
Whose roof's as low as ours! Stoop, boys: This gate
Instructs you how to adore the heavens; and bows you
To morning's holy office: The gates of monarchs
Are arch'd so high, that giants may jet through
And keep their impious turbans on, without
Good morrow to the sun.—Hail, thou fair heaven!
We house i' the rock, yet use thee not so hardly
As prouder livers do.

Guiderius.— Hail, heaven!

Arvirgus.— Hail, heaven!

Belarius.—Now for our mountain sport: Up to yon hill
Your legs are young: I'll tread these flats. Consider,
When you above perceive me like a crow,
That it is place, which lessens, and sets off.
And you may then revolve what tales I have told you
Of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war:
This service is not service, so being done,
But being so allow'd: to apprehend thus,
Draws us a profit from all things we see:
And often, to our comfort, shall we find
The sharded beetle in a safer hold
Than is the full-wing'd eagle. O, this life

Is nobler, than attending for a check;
Richer than doing nothing for a bauble;
Prouder, than rustling in unpaid-for silk:
Such gain the cap of him, that makes them fine,
Yet keeps his book uncross'd: no life to ours.

Guiderius.—Out of your proof you speak: we, poor unfledg'd,
Have never wing'd from view o' the nest; nor know not
What air's from home. Haply, this life is best,
If quiet life be best; sweeter to you,
That have a sharper known; well corresponding
With your stiff age: but, unto us, it is
A cell of ignorance; travelling abed;
A prison for a debtor, that not dares
To stride a limit.

Arviragus.— What should we speak of,
When we are old as you? when we shall hear
The rain and wind beat dark December, how
In this our pinching cave, shall we discourse
The freezing hours away? We have seen nothing:
We are beastly; subtle as the fox, for prey;
Like warlike as the wolf, for what we eat:
Our valour is, to chase what flies; our cage
We make a quire, as doth the prison'd bird,
And sing our bondage freely.

Belarius.— How you speak!
Did you but know the city's usuries,
And felt them knowingly: the art o' the court,
As hard to leave, as keep; whose top to climb
Is certain falling, or so slippery, that
The fear's as bad as falling: the toil of the war,
A pain that only seems to seek out danger
I' the name of fame, and honour; which dies i' the search;
And hath as oft a slanderous epitaph,
As record of fair act; nay, many times,
Doth ill deserve by doing well; what's worse,
Must court'sy at the censure:—O, boys, this story
The world may read in me: my body's mark'd
With Roman swords; and my report was once
First with the best of note: Cymbeline lov'd me;
And when a soldier was the theme, my name
Was not far off: then was I as a tree,
Whose boughs did bend with fruit: but, in one night,
A storm, or robbery, call it what you will,

Shook down my mellow hangings, nay, my leaves,
And left me bare to weather.

Guiderius.— Uncertain favour!

Belarius.—My fault being nothing, (as I have told you oft,)
But that two villains, whose false oaths prevail'd
Before my perfect honour, swore to Cymbeline,
I was confederate with the Romans: so,
Follow'd my banishment; and, this twenty years,
This rock, and these demesnes, have been my world:
Where I have liv'd at honest freedom; paid
More pious debts to heaven, than in all
The fore-end of my time.—But, up to the mountains;
This is not hunters' language:—he, that strikes
The venison first, shall be the lord o' the feast;
To him the other two shall minister;
And we will fear no poison, which attends
In place of greater state. I'll meet you in the valleys.
[*Exeunt* Guiderius *and* Arviragus.
How hard it is, to hide the sparks of nature!
These boys know little, they are sons to the king;
Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.
They think, they are mine: and, though train'd up thus meanly
I' the cave, wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit
The roofs of palaces; and nature prompts them,
In simple and low things, to prince it, much
Beyond the trick of others. This Polydore,—
The heir of Cymbeline and Britain, whom
The king his father call'd Guiderius,—Jove!
When on my three-foot stool I sit, and tell
The warlike feats I have done, his spirits fly out
Into my story: say,—*Thus mine enemy fell;*
And thus I set my foot on his neck; even then
The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats,
Strains his young nerves, and puts himself in posture
That acts my words. The younger brother, Cadwal,
(Once Arviragus,) in as like a figure,
Strikes life into my speech, and shows much more
His own conceiving. Hark! the game is rous'd!—
O Cymbeline! heaven, and my conscience, knows,
Thou didst unjustly banish me: whereon,
At three, and two years old, I stole these babes;
Thinking to bar thee of succession, as
Thou reft'st me of my lands. Euriphile,

Thou wast their nurse; they took thee for their mother,
And every day do honour to her grave:
Myself, Belarius, that am Morgan call'd,
They take for natural father. The game is up. [*Exit.*

Events come quickly at this stage of the drama. The next scene presents Imogen and Pisanio, who have arrived at their destination, near Milford Haven.

Imogen.—Thou told'st me, when we came from horse, the place
Was near at hand:—Ne'er long'd my mother so
To see me first, as I have now:—Pisanio! Man!
Where is Posthumus? What is in thy mind,
That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that sigh
From the inward of thee? One, but painted thus,
Would be interpreted a thing perplex'd
Beyond self-explication: Put thyself
Into a haviour of less fear, ere wildness
Vanquish my staider senses. What's the matter?
Why tender'st thou that paper to me, with
A look untender? If it be summer news,
Smile to't before: if winterly, thou need'st
But keep that countenance still.—My husband's hand!
That drug-damn'd Italy hath out-craftied him,
And he's at some hard point.—Speak, man; thy tongue
May take off some extremity, which to read
Would be even mortal to me.

Pisanio.— Please you, read;
And you shall find me, wretched man, a thing
The most disdain'd of fortune.

Imogen [*reads.*]—"Thy mistress, Pisanio, hath played the strumpet in my bed; the testimonies whereof lie bleeding in me. I speak not out of weak surmises; but from proof as strong as my grief, and as certain as I expect my revenge. That part, thou, Pisanio, must act for me, if thy faith be not tainted with the breach of hers. Let thine own hands take away her life: I shall give thee opportunity at Milford-Haven: she hath my letter for the purpose: Where, if thou fear to strike, and to make me certain it is done, thou art the pandar to her dishonour, and equally to me disloyal."

Pisanio.—What shall I need to draw my sword? the paper
Hath cut her throat already.—No, 'tis slander;
Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue

Outvenoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world: kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters.—What cheer, madam?

Imogen.—False to his bed! What is it, to be false?
To lie in watch there, and to think on him?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? if sleep charge nature,
To break it with a fearful dream of him,
And cry myself awake? that's false to his bed?
Is it?

Pisanio.—Alas, good lady!

Imogen.—I false? Thy conscience witness:—Iachimo,
Thou did'st accuse him of incontinency,
Thou then look'dst like a villain; now, methinks,
Thy favour's good enough.—Some jay of Italy,
Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him:
Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;
And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,
I must be ripp'd:—to pieces with me!—O,
Men's vows are women's traitors! All good seeming,
By thy revolt, O husband, shall be thought
Put on for villainy; not born, where't grows;
But worn, a bait for ladies.

Pisanio.— Good madam, hear me.

Imogen.—True honest men being heard, like false Æneas,
Were, in his time, thought false: and Sinon's weeping
Did scandal many a holy tear; took pity
From most true wretchedness: so, thou, Posthumus,
Wilt lay the leaven on all proper men;
Goodly, and gallant, shall be false, and perjur'd,
From thy great fall. Come fellow, be thou honest:
Do thou thy master's bidding. When thou seest him,
A little witness my obedience. Look!
I draw the sword myself: take it, and hit
The innocent mansion of my love, my heart:
Fear not; 'tis empty of all things but grief:
Thy master is not there, who was indeed
The riches of it. Do his bidding; strike.
Thou may'st be valiant in a better cause,
But now thou seem'st a coward.

Pisanio.— Hence, vile instrument!
Thou shalt not damn my hand.

Imogen.— Why, I must die;
And if I do not by thy hand, thou art
No servant of thy master's. 'Gainst self-slaughter
There is a prohibition so divine*
That cravens my weak hand. Come, here's my heart,—
Something's afore't. Soft, soft, we'll no defence:
Obedient as the scabbard. What is here?
The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus,
All turned to heresy? Away, away,
Corrupters of my faith! You shall no more
Be stomachers to my heart. Thus may poor fools
Believe false teachers: though those that are betrayed
Do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor
Stands in worse case of woe. . . . Pr'ythee, despatch:
The lamb entreats the butcher: where's thy knife?
Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding,
When I desire it too.

Pisanio.— O gracious lady,
Since I received command to do this business
I have not slept one wink.

Imogen.— Do it, and to bed then.

Pisanio.—I'll wake mine eyeballs blind first.

Imogen.— Wherefore, then,
Did'st undertake it? Why hast thou abused
So many miles with a pretence? this place?
Mine action and thine own? our horses' labour?
The time inviting thee? the perturbed court
For my being absent? whereunto I never
Purpose return. Why hast thou gone so far,
To be unbent when thou hast ta'en thy stand,
The elected deer before thee?

Pisanio.— But to win time
To lose so bad employment; in the which
I have considered of a course. Good lady,
Hear me with patience.

Imogen.— Talk thy tongue weary; speak:
I have heard I am a strumpet; and mine ear,

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* Hypercriticism might object to this proposition in pre-Christian times; but Shakespeare, when searching for the deepest springs in the human heart, was not limited by subservience to mere chronological details when he emphasized great principles.

Therein false struck, can take no greater wound,
Nor tent to bottom that. But speak.
Pisanio.— Then, madam,
I thought you would not back again.
Imogen.— Most like,
Bringing me here to kill me.
Pisanio.— Not so, neither:
But if I were as wise as honest, then
My purpose would prove well. It cannot be
But that my master is abused: some villain,
Ay, singular in his art, hath done you both
This cursed injury.
Imogen.—Some Roman courtezan.
Pisanio.— No, on my life.
I'll give but notice you are dead, and send him
Some bloody sign of it; for 'tis commanded
I should do so. You shall be missed at court,
And that will well confirm it.
Imogen.— Why, good fellow,
What shall I do the while? where bide? how live?
Or in my life what comfort, when I am
Dead to my husband?
Pisanio.— If you'll back to the court,—
Imogen.—No court, no father; nor no more ado
With that harsh, noble, simple nothing, Cloten.

At this juncture the state of public affairs affords an outlook which commends itself to Imogen. The ambitious Queen has persuaded Cymbeline to refuse to pay the customary tribute to Rome, and Lucius, a Roman General, is expected at Milford Haven as an ambassador. If Imogen would disguise herself as a page (Pisanio has with him the appropriate dress) she might serve Lucius, who is "honourable and, doubling that, most holy;" she may learn all that has happened in Rome.

Imogen bravely declares, "This attempt I am soldier to, and will abide it with a prince's courage."

From the hill on which they stood Pisanio showed Milford Haven to her, and hastened back to the Court.

Imogen, new to such a pilgrimage, loses her way, and after two days finds herself, famishing, at the cave in which Belarius and her brothers live.

I see, a man's life is a tedious one:
I have tired myself, and for two nights together
Have made the ground my bed. I should be sick,
But that my resolution helps me. Milford,
When from the mountain-top Pisanio showed thee,
Thou wast within a ken: O Jove! I think
Foundations fly the wretched; such, I mean,
Where they should be relieved. Two beggars told me,
I could not miss my way: Will poor folks lie,
That have afflictions on them; knowing 'tis
A punishment, or trial? Yes, no wonder,
When rich ones scarce tell true: To lapse in fulness
Is sorer, than to lie for need; and falsehood
Is worse in kings, than beggars.—My dear lord!
Thou art one o' the false ones: Now I think on thee,
My hunger's gone; but even before, I was
At point to sink for food.—But what is this?
Here is a path to it: 'Tis some savage hold:
I were best not call; I dare not call: yet famine,
Ere clean it o'erthrow nature, makes it valiant.
Plenty, and peace, breeds cowards; hardness ever
Of hardiness is mother.—Ho! who's here?
If any thing that's civil, speak; if savage,
Take, or lend.—Ho!—No answer? then I'll enter.
Best draw my sword; and if mine enemy
But fear the sword like me, he'll scarcely look on't.
Such a foe, good heavens! [*She goes into the cave.*

Enter Belarius, Guiderius, *and* Arviragus.

Belarius.—You, Polydore, have prov'd best woodman, and
Are master of the feast: Cadwal, and I,
Will play the cook, and servant; 'tis our match:
The sweat of industry would dry, and die,
But for the end it works to. Come; our stomachs
Will make what's homely, savoury: Weariness
Can snore upon the flint, when restive sloth
Finds the down pillow hard.—Now, peace be here,
Poor house, that keep'st thyself!

Guiderius.— I am thoroughly weary.

Arviragus.—I am weak with toil, yet strong in appetite.
Guiderius.—There is cold meat i' the cave; we'll browse on that,
Whilst what we have kill'd be cook'd.
Belarius.— Stay; come not in: [*Looking in.*
But that it eats our victuals, I should think
Here were a fairy.
Guiderius.— What's the matter, sir?
Belarius.—By Jupiter, an angel! or, if not,
An earthly paragon!—Behold divineness
No elder than a boy!

Enter IMOGEN.

Imogen.—Good masters, harm me not:
Before I enter'd here, I call'd; and thought
To have begg'd, or bought what I have took: good troth,
I have stolen nought; nor would not, though I had found
Gold strew'd o' the floor. Here's money for my meat:
I would have left it on the board, so soon
As I had made my meal; and parted
With prayers for the provider.
Guiderius.— Money, youth?
Arviragus.—All gold and silver rather turn to dirt!
As 'tis no better reckon'd, but of those
Who worship dirty gods.
Imogen.— I see you are angry:
Know, if you kill me for my fault, I should
Have died, had I not made it.
Belarius.— Whither bound?
Imogen.—To Milford Haven, sir.
Belarius.— What is your name?
Imogen.—Fidele, sir: I have a kinsman, who
Is bound for Italy; he embark'd at Milford;
To whom being gone, almost spent with hunger,
I am fallen in this offence.
Belarius.— Pr'ythee, fair youth,
Think us no churls; nor measure our good minds
By this rude place we live in. Well encounter'd!
'Tis almost night: you shall have better cheer
Ere you depart; and thanks, to stay and eat it.—
Boys, bid him welcome.
Guiderius.— Were you a woman, youth,
I should woo hard, but be your groom.—In honesty,
I bid for you, as I'd buy.
Arviragus.— I'll make 't my comfort,

He is a man; I'll love him as my brother:—
And such a welcome as I'd give to him,
After long absence, such is yours:—most welcome!
Be sprightly, for you fall 'mongst friends.

Imogen.— 'Mongst friends!
[*Aside.*] If brothers?—Would it had been so, that they
Had been my father's sons, then had my prize
Been less; and so more equal ballasting
To thee, Posthumus.

Belarius.— He wrings at some distress.

Guiderius.—'Would, I could free't!

Arviragus.— Or I; whate'er it be,
What pain it cost, what danger! Gods!

Belarius.— Hark, boys. [*Whispering.*

Imogen.—Great men,
That had a court no bigger than this cave,
That did attend themselves, and had the virtue
Which their own conscience seal'd them, (laying by
That nothing gift—of differing multitudes,)
Could not out-peer these twain. Pardon me, gods!
I'd change my sex to be companions with them,
Since Leonatus' false.

Belarius.— It shall be so:
Boys, we'll go dress our hunt.—Fair youth, come in:
Discourse is heavy, fasting; when we have supp'd,
We'll mannerly demand thee of thy story,
So far as thou wilt speak it.

Guiderius.— Pray, draw near.

Arviragus.—The night to the owl, and morn to the lark, less welcome.

Imogen.—Thanks, sir.

Arviragus.— I pray, draw near. [*Exeunt.*

While Imogen is winning the affections of her brothers and the admiration of Belarius, the boorish Cloten is plotting to destroy her happiness and to cut off the head of Posthumus.

Pisanio, believing Imogen to be safe under the protection of the Roman General (Lucius), tells Cloten that Imogen has gone to Milford, and Cloten, arrayed in Posthumus' garments, starts on his malicious errand.

Meanwhile public affairs have been converted from peace to war, under the Queen's promptings, and a battle must soon ensue.

But Imogen's fortunes must now be followed.

SCENE II.—BEFORE THE CAVE.

Enter, from the Cave, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, *and* IMOGEN.

Belarius.—You are not well: [*To* Imogen.] remain here in the cave;
We'll come to you after hunting.

Arviragus.— Brother, stay here: [*To* Imogen.
Are we not brothers?

Imogen.— So man and man should be;
But clay and clay differs in dignity,
Whose dust is both alike. I am very sick.

Guiderius.—Go you to hunting, I'll abide with him.

Imogen.—So sick I am not;—yet I am not well:
But not so citizen a wanton, as
To seem to die, ere sick: so please you, leave me;
Stick to your journal course: the breach of custom
Is breach of all. I am ill; but your being by me
Cannot amend me: Society is no comfort
To one not sociable: I am not very sick,
Since I can reason of it. Pray you, trust me here:
I'll rob none but myself; and let me die,
Stealing so poorly.

Guiderius.— I love thee; I have spoke it:
How much the quantity, the weight as much,
As I do love my father.

Belarius.— What? how? how?

Arviragus.—If it be sin to say so, sir, I yoke me
In my good brother's fault: I know not why
I love this youth; and I have heard you say,
Love's reason's without reason; the bier at door,
And a demand who is't shall die, I'd say,
My father, not this youth.

Belarius.— O noble strain! [*Aside.*
O worthiness of nature! breed of greatness!
Cowards father cowards, and base things sire base:
Nature hath meal, and bran; contempt, and grace.
I am not their father; yet who this should be,

Doth miracle itself, lov'd before me.—
'Tis the ninth hour of the morn.

Arviragus.— Brother, farewell.

Imogen.—I wish ye sport.

Arviragus.— You health.—So please you, sir.

Imogen [*aside.*]—These are kind creatures. Gods, what lies I have heard!
Our courtiers say, all's savage but at court:
Experience, O, thou disprov'st report!
The imperious seas breed monsters; for the dish,
Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish.
I am sick still; heart-sick.—Pisanio,
I'll now taste of thy drug.

Guiderius.— I could not stir him:
He said, he was gentle, but unfortunate;
Dishonestly afflicted, but yet honest.

Arviragus.—Thus did he answer me: yet said, hereafter
I might know more.

Belarius.— To the field, to the field:—
We'll leave you for this time; go in, and rest.

Arviragus.—We'll not be long away.

Belarius.— Pray, be not sick,
For you must be our housewife.

Imogen.— Well, or ill,
I am bound to you.

Belarius.— And shalt be ever. [*Exit* Imogen.
This youth, howe'er distress'd, appears, he hath had
Good ancestors.

Arviragus.— How angel-like he sings!

Guiderius.—But his neat cookery! He cut our roots in characters;
And sauc'd our broths, as Juno had been sick,
And he her dieter.

Arviragus.— Nobly he yokes
A smiling with a sigh: as if the sigh
Was that it was, for not being such a smile;
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
From so divine a temple, to commix
With winds that sailors rail at.

Guiderius.— I do note,
That grief and patience, rooted in him both,
Mingle their spurs together.

Arviragus.— Grow, patience!
And let the stinking elder, grief, untwine

His perishing root, with the increasing vine!

Belarius.—It is great morning. Come; away.—Who's there?

Enter CLOTEN.

Cloten.—I cannot find those runagates: that villain
Hath mock'd me:—I am faint.

Belarius.— Those runagates!
Means he not us? I partly know him; 'tis
Cloten, the son o' the queen. I fear some ambush.
I saw him not these many years, and yet
I know 'tis he:—We are held as outlaws:—Hence.

Guiderius.—He is but one: You and my brother search
What companies are near: pray you, away;
Let me alone with him. [*Exeunt* Belarius *and* Arviragus.

Cloten.— Soft! What are you
That fly me thus? some villain mountaineers?
I have heard of such.—What slave art thou?

Guiderius.— A thing
More slavish did I ne'er, than answering
A slave without a knock.

Cloten.— Thou art a robber,
A law-breaker, a villain: Yield thee, thief.

Guiderius.—To who? to thee? What art thou? Have not I
An arm as big as thine? a heart as big?
Thy words, I grant, are bigger; for I wear not
My dagger in my mouth. Say what thou art,
Why I should yield to thee.

Cloten.— Thou villain base,
Know'st me not by my clothes?

Guiderius.— No, nor thy tailor, rascal,
Who is thy grandfather; he made those clothes,
Which as it seems make thee.

Cloten.— Thou precious varlet,
My tailor made them not.

Guiderius.— Hence, then, and thank
The man that gave thee them. Thou art some fool;
I am loath to beat thee.

Cloten.— Thou injurious thief,
Hear but my name and tremble.

Guiderius.— What's thy name?

Cloten.—Cloten, thou villain.

Guiderius.—Cloten, thou double villain, be thy name,
I cannot tremble at it; were it toad, or adder, spider,
'Twould move me sooner.

Cloten.— To thy further fear,
Nay, to thy mere confusion, thou shalt know,
I am son to the queen.
Guiderius.— I am sorry for it; not seeming
So worthy as thy birth.
Cloten.— Art not afeard?
Guiderius.—Those that I reverence, those I fear, the wise:
At fools I laugh, not fear them.
Cloten.— Die the death:
When I have slain thee with my proper hand,
I'll follow those that even now fled hence,
And on the gates of Lud's town set your heads:
Yield, rustic mountaineer. [*Exeunt fighting.*

Re-enter BELARIUS *and* ARVIRAGUS.

Belarius.— No companies abroad?
Arviragus.—None in the world: you did mistake him, sure.
Belarius.—I cannot tell: long is it since I saw him.
But time hath nothing blurred those lines of favour
Which then he wore: the snatches in his voice,
And burst of speaking were as his: I am absolute
'Twas very Cloten.
Arviragus.— In this place we left them:
I wish my brother make good time with him,
You say he is so fell.
Belarius.— Being scarce made up,
I mean, to man, he had not apprehension
Of roaring terrors: for defect of judgment
Is oft the cause of fear. But see;—thy brother.

Re-enter GUIDERIUS *with* CLOTEN'S HEAD.

Guiderius.—This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse;
There was no money in 't: not Hercules
Could have knocked out his brains, for he had none:
Yet I, not doing this, the fool had borne
My head as I do his.
Belarius.— What hast thou done?
Guiderius.—I am perfect what: cut off one Cloten's head,
Son to the queen, after his own report;
Who called me traitor, mountaineer, and swore
With his own single hand he'd take us in,
Displace our heads, where, thank the gods, they grow,
And set them on Lud's town.
Belarius.— We are all undone.

Guiderius.—Why, worthy father, what have we to lose,
But that he swore to take, our lives? The law
Protects not us: then why should we be tender,
To let an arrogant piece of flesh threat us,
Play judge and executioner all himself,
For we do fear the law? What company
Discover you abroad?

Belarius.— No single soul
Can we set eye on: but in all safe reason,
He must have some attendants. Though his humour
Was nothing but mutation, ay, and that
From one bad thing to worse; not frenzy, not
Absolute madness could so far have raved,
To bring him here alone: although perhaps,
It may be heard at court that such as we
Cave here, hunt here, are outlaws, and in time
May make some stronger head; the which he hearing,
As it is like him—might break out and swear
He'd fetch us in; yet is 't not probable
He'd come alone, either he so undertaking,
Or they so suffering: then on good ground we fear,
If we do fear this body hath a tail
More perilous than the head.

Arviragus.— Let ordinance
Come as the gods foresay it: howsoe'er,
My brother hath done well.

Belarius.— I had no mind
To hunt this day: the boy Fidele's sickness
Did make my way long forth.

Guiderius.— With his own sword,
Which he did wave against my throat, I have ta'en
His head from him: I'll throw 't into the creek
Behind our rock; and let it to the sea,
And tell the fishes he's the queen's son, Cloten:
That's all I reck. [*Exit.*

Belarius.— I fear, 'twill be reveng'd:
'Would, Polydore, thou had'st not done 't! though valour
Becomes thee well enough.

Arviragus.— 'Would I had done 't,
So the revenge alone pursued me!—Polydore,
I love thee brotherly; but envy much,
Thou hast robb'd me of this deed: I would, revenges,

That possible strength might meet, would seek us through,
And put us to our answer.

Belarius.— Well, 'tis done:—
We'll hunt no more to-day, nor seek for danger
Where there's no profit. I pr'ythee, to our rock;
You and Fidele play the cooks; I'll stay
Till hasty Polydore return, and bring him
To dinner presently.

Arviragus.— Poor sick Fidele!
I'll willingly to him: To gain his colour,
I'd let a parish of such Clotens' blood,
And praise myself for charity. [*Exit.*

Belarius.— O thou goddess,
Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st
In these two princely boys! They are as gentle
As zephyrs, blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head: and yet as rough,
Their royal blood enchaf'd, as the rudest wind,
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And make him stoop to the vale. 'Tis wonder,
That an invisible instinct should frame them
To royalty unlearn'd; honour untaught;
Civility not seen from other: valour,
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop
As if it had been sow'd! Yet still it's strange,
What Cloten's being here to us portends;
Or what his death will bring us.

Re-enter GUIDERIUS.

Guiderius.— Where's my brother?
I have sent Cloten's clot-poll down the stream,
In embassy to his mother: his body is hostage
For his return. *(Solemn music.)*

Belarius.—My ingenious instrument!
Hark! Polydore, it sounds! But what occasion
Hath Cadwal now to give it motion? Hark!

Guiderius.—Is he at home?

Belarius.— He went hence even now.

Guiderius.—What does he mean? Since death of my dear'st mother,
It did not speak before. All solemn things
Should answer solemn accidents. The matter?
Triumphs for nothing and lamenting toys,
Is jollity for apes, and grief for boys.
Is Cadwal mad?

Re-enter ARVIRAGUS, *with* IMOGEN, *as dead, in his arms.*

Belarius.— Look, here he comes,
And brings the dire occasion in his arms,
Of what we blame him for!*

Arviragus.— The bird is dead,
That we have made so much on. I had rather
Have skipped from sixteen years to sixty,
To have turned my leaping time into a crutch,
Than have seen this.

Guiderius.— O! sweetest, fairest lily,
My brother wears thee not one half so well
As when thou grew'st thyself.

Belarius.— O! melancholy!
Whoever yet could sound thy bottom? find
The ooze to show what coast thy sluggish crare
Might easiliest harbour in? Thou blessed thing!
Jove knows what man thou might'st have made; but I,
Thou died'st, a most rare boy, of melancholy!—
How found you him?

Arviragus.— Stark, as you see:
Thus smiling, as some fly had tickled slumber,
Not as death's dart, being laugh'd at: his right cheek
Reposing on a cushion.

Guiderius.— Where?

Arviragus.— O' the floor;
His arms thus leagu'd: I thought, he slept; and put
My clouted brogues from off my feet, whose rudeness
Answer'd my steps too loud.

Guiderius.— Why, he but sleeps:
If he be gone, he'll make his grave a bed;
With female fairies will his tomb be haunted,
And worms will not come to thee.

Arviragus.— With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,

---

* The wicked queen, hoping to destroy some one, had given to Pisanio a box containing a powerful opiate, which the king's physician, Cornelius, gave to her as poison, but which he, distrusting her, took care to prepare as an opiate only, although a potent one. Pisanio, on leaving Imogen, gave the box to her, as containing a remedy for any distemper. Imogen, distressed in mind and body, had resorted to the remedy in the cave.

I'll sweeten thy sad grave: Thou shalt not lack
The flower, that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath: the ruddock would,
With charitable bill (O bill, sore-shaming
Those rich-left heirs, that let their fathers lie
Without a monument!) bring thee all this;
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-ground thy corse.

Guiderius.— Pr'ythee, have done;
And do not play in wench-like words with that
Which is so serious. Let us bury him,
And not protract with admiration what
Is now due debt.—To the grave.

Arviragus.— Say, where shall's lay him?

Guiderius.—By good Euriphile, our mother.

Arviragus.— Be 't so:
And let us, Polydore, though now our voices
Have got the mannish crack, sing him to the ground,
As once our mother; use like note, and words,
Save that Euriphile must be Fidele.

Guiderius.— Cadwal,
I cannot sing: I'll weep, and word it with thee:
For notes of sorrow, out of tune, are worse
Than priests and fanes that lie.

Arviragus.— We'll speak it then.

Belarius.—Great griefs, I see, medicine the less: for Cloten
Is quite forgot. He was a queen's son, boys:
And, though he came our enemy, remember,
He was paid for that: though mean and mighty, rotting
Together, have one dust, yet reverence,
(That angel of the world,) doth make distinction
Of place 'tween high and low. Our foe was princely;
And though you took his life, as being our foe,
Yet bury him as a prince.

Guiderius.— Pray you, fetch him hither.
Thersites' body is as good as Ajax',
When neither are alive.

Arviragus.— If you'll go fetch him,
We'll say our song the whilst.—Brother, begin.

[*Exit* Belarius.

Guiderius.—Nay, Cadwal, we must lay his head to the east:
My father hath a reason for 't.
Arviragus.— 'Tis true.
Guiderius.—Come on then, and remove him.
Arviragus.— So,—begin.

SONG.

Guiderius.—Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Arviragus.—Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe, and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Guiderius.—Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Arviragus.— Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone.
Guiderius.—Fear not slander, censure rash;
Arviragus.— Thou hast finish'd joy and moan:
Both.— All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

Guiderius.—No exorciser harm thee!
Arviragus.—Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Guiderius.—Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Arviragus.—Nothing ill come near thee!
Both.— Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!

Re-enter BELARIUS *with the body of* CLOTEN.

Guiderius.—We have done our obsequies: Come, lay him down.
Belarius.—Here's a few flowers; but about midnight, more:
The herbs, that have on them cold dew o' the night,
Are strewings fitt'st for graves.—Upon their faces:—
You were as flowers, now wither'd: even so
These herb'lets shall, which we upon you strow.
Come on, away: apart upon your knees.
The ground, that gave them first, has them again:
Their pleasures here are past, so is their pain.
[*Exeunt* Belarius, Guiderius, *and* Arviragus.

Imogen (awaking).—Yes, sir, to Milford Haven; which is the way?
I thank you.—By yon bush?—Pray, how far thither?
'Ods pittikins!—can it be six miles yet?—
I have gone all night:—'Faith, I'll lie down and sleep.
But, soft! no bedfellow:—O, gods and goddesses!
[*Seeing the body.*
These flowers are like the pleasures of the world;
This bloody man, the care on 't.—I hope, I dream;
For so I thought I was a cave-keeper,
And cook to honest creatures: But 'tis not so;
'Twas but a bolt of nothing, shot at nothing,
Which the brain makes of fumes: Our very eyes
Are sometimes like our judgments, blind. Good faith,
I tremble still with fear: but if there be
Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity
As a wren's eye, fear'd gods, a part of it!
The dream's here still: even when I wake, it is
Without me, as within me; not imagin'd, felt.
A headless man!—The garments of Posthumus!
I know the shape of his leg: this is his hand;
His foot Mercurial: His Martial thigh;
The brawns of Hercules: but his Jovial face—
Murder in heaven?—How?—'Tis gone.—Pisanio,
All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks,
And mine to boot, be darted on thee! Thou,
Conspir'd with that irregulous devil, Cloten,
Hast here cut off my lord.—To write, and read,
Be henceforth treacherous!—Damn'd Pisanio
Hath with his forged letters,—damn'd Pisanio—
From this most bravest vessel of the world
Struck the main-top!—O, Posthumus! alas,
Where is thy head? where's that? Ah me! where's that?
Pisanio might have kill'd thee at the heart,
And left this head on.—How should this be? Pisanio?
'Tis he, and Cloten: malice and lucre in them
Have laid this woe here. O, 'tis pregnant, pregnant!
The drug he gave me, which, he said, was precious
And cordial to me, have I not found it
Murderous to the senses? That confirms it home:
This is Pisanio's deed, and Cloten's: O!—
Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood,

That we the horrider may seem to those
Which chance to find us: O, my lord, my lord:
[*She falls on the body.*

Enter LUCIUS, *a* CAPTAIN, *and other* OFFICERS, *and a* SOOTHSAYER.

. . . . . .

Lucius.— Soft, ho! what trunk is here,
Without his top? The ruin speaks, that sometime
It was a worthy building.—How! a page!—
Or dead, or sleeping on him? But dead, rather:
For nature doth abhor to make his bed
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead.—
Let's see the boy's face.

Captain.— He is alive, my lord.

Lucius.—He'll then instruct us of this body.—Young one,
Inform us of thy fortunes; for, it seems,
They crave to be demanded. Who is this,
Thou mak'st thy bloody pillow? Or who was he,
That, otherwise than noble nature did,
Hath alter'd that good picture? What's thy interest
In this sad wreck? How came it? Who is it?
What art thou?

Imogen.— I am nothing: or if not,
Nothing to be were better. This was my master.
A very valiant Briton, and a good,
That here by mountaineers lies slain—Alas!
There are no more such masters: I may wander
From east to occident, cry out for service,
Try many, all good, serve truly, never
Find such another master.

Lucius.— 'Lack, good youth!
Thou mov'st no less with thy complaining, than
Thy master in bleeding. . . .

Imogen.—Say you, sir?

Lucius.— Thy name?

Imogen.— Fidele.

Lucius.—Thou dost approve thyself the very same:
Thy name well fits thy faith; thy faith, thy name.
Wilt take thy chance with me? I will not say,
Thou shalt be so well master'd; but, be sure,
No less belov'd. The Roman emperor's letters,
Sent by a consul to me, should not sooner
Than thine own worth prefer thee; go with me.

Imogen.—I'll follow, sir. But first, an't please the gods,
I'll hide my master from the flies, as deep
As these poor pickaxes can dig: and when
With wild wood-leaves and weeds I have strew'd his grave,
And on it said a century of prayers,
Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep, and sigh;
And, leaving so his service, follow you,
So please you entertain me.
Lucius.— Ay, good youth;
And rather father thee, than master thee.
My friends,
The boy hath taught us manly duties: let us
Find out the prettiest daisied plot we can,
And make him with our pikes and partisans
A grave: Come; arm him.—Boy, he is preferr'd
By thee to us; and he shall be interr'd,
As soldiers can. Be cheerful; wipe thine eyes:
Some falls are means the happier to arise. [*Exeunt.*

The armies of Rome and of Cymbeline are mustering for battle, and Guiderius and Arviragus thirst to join their countrymen in spite of Belarius' remonstrances.

Guiderius.— Than be so,
Better to cease to be. Pray, sir, to the army:
I and my brother are not known; yourself,
So out of thought, and thereto so o'ergrown,
Cannot be question'd.
Arviragus.— By this sun that shines,
I'll thither: What thing is it, that I never
Did see man die? scarce ever look'd on blood,
But that of coward hares, hot goats, and venison?
Never bestrid a horse, save one, that had
A rider like myself, who ne'er wore rowel
Nor iron on his heel? I am asham'd
To look upon the holy sun, to have
The benefit of his bless'd beams, remaining
So long a poor unknown.
Guiderius.— By heavens, I'll go;
If you will bless me, sir, and give me leave,
I'll take the better care; but if you will not,
The hazard therefore due fall on me, by
The hands of Romans!

Arviragus.— So say I; Amen.
Belarius.—No reason I, since on your lives you set
So slight a valuation, should reserve
My crack'd one to more care. Have with you, boys:
If in your country wars you chance to die,
That is my bed too, lads, and there I'll lie:
Lead, lead.—The time seems long: their blood thinks scorn,
[*Aside.*
Till it fly out, and show them princes born. [*Exeunt.*

Posthumus, having lived to repent his order for the death of Imogen, has arrived with the Roman army, but, weary of life, disrobes himself and joins the Britons in a peasant's dress, in which he smites down Iachimo, but spares his life.

Cymbeline is captured, but old Belarius, Guiderius, Arviragus and Posthumus rescue him and win the battle, capturing Lucius and others, among whom is the disguised Imogen.

Ready to die, Posthumus resumes a Roman dress and becomes a prisoner.

The fifth scene of the last Act unwinds all the skeins which have been entangled in the drama.

Lucius asks that his boy, Fidele (*i.e.*, Imogen), may be ransomed, and Cymbeline, seeing Fidele, says :—

I have surely seen him,
His favour is familiar to me.
Boy, thou hast looked thyself into my grace,
And art mine own.—I know not why, nor wherefore,
To say, live, boy: ne'er thank thy master; live:
And ask of Cymbeline what boon thou wilt,
Fitting my bounty, and thy state, I'll give it;
Yea, though thou do demand a prisoner,
The noblest taken.

Lucius anticipates that Imogen will plead for his liberty, but she tells him that "there is other work in hand." She sees the ring, her present to Posthumus, on the hand of Iachimo, and she demands to know "of whom he had this ring."

Iago confesses his villainy. Posthumus advances from the band of captives, calling down imprecations against himself for slaughtering Imogen:—

Spit and throw stones, cast mire upon me, set
The dogs in the street to bay me: every villain
Be called Posthumus Leonatus, and
Be villainy less than 'twas! O! Imogen!
My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,
Imogen, Imogen!

Imogen.—Peace, my lord! hear, hear.

Posthumus.—Shall's have a play of this? Thou scornful page!
There lie thy part. [*Striking her, she falls.*

Pisanio.— O, gentlemen, help!
Mine, and your mistress.—O my lord Posthumus,
You ne'er killed Imogen till now. Help, help!
Mine honoured lady!

. . . . . .

Imogen.—Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?
Think that you are upon a rock; and now
Throw me again. [*Embracing him.*

Posthumus.— Hang there like fruit, my soul,
Till the tree die.

Cymbeline.— How now, my flesh, my child?
What, mak'st thou me a dullard in this act?
Wilt thou not speak to me?

Imogen [*kneeling.*] Your blessing, sir.

The disappearance of Cloten being spoken of, Guiderius mentions that he slew him, and Cymbeline regrets that Guiderius must die* for slaying a person of such high degree.

Cymbeline.— I am sorry for thee;
By thine own tongue thou art condemned, and must

* This pronouncement seems, at first sight, eccentric and harsh; but by the usage of ancient times, among our ancestors there could be no adjustment but by death when the slayer was so inferior in position as the supposed peasant Guiderius was to Prince Cloten. Belarius, therefore, correctly appeals to the same ancestral tradition when he shows that Guiderius, being a prince himself, was not amenable to the law or custom to which Cymbeline referred.

Endure our law: thou'rt dead.
Imogen.— That headless man
I thought had been my lord.
Cymbeline.— Bind the offender,
And take him from our presence.
Belarius.— Stay, sir king:
This man is better than the man he slew,
As well descended as thyself; and hath
More of thee merited, than a band of Clotens
Had ever scar for.—Let his arms alone; [*To the guard.*
They were not born for bondage.
Cymbeline.— Why, old soldier,
Wilt thou undo the worth thou art unpaid for,
By tasting of our wrath? How of descent
As good as we?
Arviragus.— In that he spake too far.
Cymbeline.—And thou shalt die for't.
Belarius.— We will die all three,
But I will prove, that two of us are as good
As I have given out him.—My sons, I must,
For mine own part, unfold a dangerous speech,
Though, haply, well for you.
Arviragus.— Your danger is ours.
Guiderius.—And our good his.
Belarius.— Have at it then by leave.
Thou had'st, great king, a subject, who
Was call'd Belarius.
Cymbeline.— What of him? he is
A banish'd traitor.
Belarius.— He it is, that hath
Assum'd this age: indeed, a banish'd man;
I know not how a traitor.
Cymbeline.— Take him hence;
The whole world shall not save him.
Belarius.— Not too hot:
First pay me for the nursing of thy sons;
And let it be confiscate all, so soon
As I have receiv'd it.
Cymbeline.— Nursing of my sons?
Belarius.—I am too blunt, and saucy: here's my knee;
Ere I arise, I will prefer my sons;
Then, spare not the old father. Mighty sir,
These two young gentlemen, that call me father,

And think they are my sons, are none of mine;
They are the issue of your loins, my liege,
And blood of your begetting.

Cymbeline.— How! my issue?

Belarius.—So sure as you your father's. I, old Morgan,
Am that Belarius whom you sometime banish'd:
Your pleasure was my mere offence, my punishment
Itself, and all my treason; that I suffer'd,
Was all the harm I did. These gentle princes
(For such, and so they are,) these twenty years
Have I train'd up: those arts they have, as I
Could put into them; my breeding was, sir, as
Your highness knows. Their nurse, Euriphile,
Whom for the theft I wedded, stole these children
Upon my banishment: I mov'd her to't;
Having receiv'd the punishment before,
For that which I did then: beaten for loyalty,
Excited me to treason: their dear loss,
The more of you 'twas felt, the more it shap'd
Unto my end of stealing them. But, gracious sir,
Here are your sons again; and I must lose
Two of the sweet'st companions in the world:—
The benediction of these covering heavens
Fall on their heads like dew! for they are worthy
To inlay heaven with stars.

Cymbeline.— Thou weep'st, and speak'st.
The service, that you three have done, is more
Unlike than this thou tell'st: I lost my children;
If these be they, I know not how to wish
A pair of worthier sons.

Belarius.— Be pleas'd awhile.—
This gentleman, whom I call Polydore,
Most worthy prince, as yours, is true Guiderius:
This gentleman, my Cadwal, Arviragus,
Your younger princely son; he, sir, was lapp'd
In a most curious mantle, wrought by the hand
Of his queen mother, which, for more probation,
I can with ease produce.

Cymbeline.— Guiderius had
Upon his neck a mole, a sanguine star;
It was a mark of wonder.

Belarius.— This is he;
Who hath upon him still that natural stamp:

It was wise nature's end in the donation,
To be his evidence now.

Cymbeline.— O, what am I?
A mother to the birth of three? Ne'er mother
Rejoic'd deliverance more:—Bless'd may you be,
That, after this strange starting from your orbs,
You may reign in them now!—O Imogen,
Thou hast lost by this a kingdom.

Imogen.— No, my lord;
I have got two worlds by't.—O my gentle brothers,
Have we thus met? O never say hereafter,
But I am truest speaker: you call'd me brother,
When I was but your sister; I you brothers,
When you were so indeed.

Cymbeline.— Did you e'er meet?

Arviragus.—Ay, my good lord.

Guiderius.— And at first meeting lov'd;
Continued so, until we thought he died.

Cornelius.—By the queen's dram she swallow'd.

Cymbeline.— O rare instinct!
When shall I hear all through? This fierce abridgement,
Hath to it circumstantial branches, which
Distinction should be rich in.—Where, how liv'd you?
And when came you to serve our Roman captive?
How parted with your brothers? how first met them?
Why fled you from the court? and whither? These,
And your three motives to the battle, with
I know not how much more, should be demanded;
And all the other by-dependencies,
From chance to chance; but nor the time, nor place,
Will serve our long inter'gatories. See,
Posthumus anchors upon Imogen;
And she, like harmless lightning, throws her eye
On him, her brothers, me, her master, hitting
Each object with a joy; the counterchange
Is severally in all. Let's quit this ground,
And smoke the temple with our sacrifices.—
[To *Belarius.*]—Thou art my brother; So we'll hold thee ever.

Imogen.—You are my father too; and did relieve me,
To see this gracious season.

Cymbeline.— All o'erjoy'd,
Save these in bonds; let them be joyful too,
For they shall taste our comfort.

Imogen.— My good master,
I will yet do you service.
Lucius.— Happy be you!
Cymbeline.—The forlorn soldier, that so nobly fought,
He would have well becom'd this place, and grac'd
The thankings of a king.
Posthumus.— I am, sir,
The soldier that did company these three
In poor beseeming; 'twas a fitment for
The purpose I then follow'd;—That I was he,
Speak, Iachimo: I had you down, and might
Have made you finish.
Iachimo.— I am down again: [*Kneeling.*
But now my heavy conscience sinks my knee,
As then your force did. Take that life, 'beseech you,
Which I so often owe: but, your ring first;
And here the bracelet of the truest princess,
That ever swore her faith.
Posthumus.— Kneel not to me;
The power that I have on you, is to spare you;
The malice towards you, to forgive you: Live,
And deal with others better.
Cymbeline.— Nobly doom'd;
We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law;
Pardon's the word to all.
Arviragus.— You help us, sir,
As you did mean indeed to be our brother;
Joy'd are we, that you are.
Posthumus.—Your servant, princes.
Cymbeline.— Well,
. . . . . .
My peace we will begin:—And, Caius Lucius,
Although the victor, we submit to Cæsar,
And to the Roman empire; promising
To pay our wonted tribute, from the which
We were dissuaded by our wicked queen.
. . . . . .
Laud we the gods;
And let our crooked smokes climb to their nostrils
From our bless'd altars. Publish we this peace
To all our subjects. Set we forward: let
A Roman and a British ensign wave
Friendly together: so through Lud's town march:

And in the temple of great Jupiter
Our peace we'll ratify; seal it with feasts.—
Set on there: Never was a war did cease,
Ere bloody hands were wash'd, with such a peace. [*Exeunt.*

No apology is necessary for including in these pages copious extracts to justify the criticism of those who see in Imogen one of the most beautiful of Shakespeare's characters; so true, so tender, yet so daring; so reverential, yet so self-reliant, when surrounding circumstances demanded that she should act.

In The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare presented another heroine who is extolled as one of his noblest creations, the Queen Hermione.

Lady Theodore Martin, in her book on "Shakespeare's Female Characters," devoted nearly sixty pages to a description of Hermione's character.

In this work the object is, so far as is possible, to make such consecutive citations from the drama as shall present the character in Shakespeare's own description (through one of the *dramatis personæ*) to the reader.

Polixenes, King of Bohemia, is visiting his friend Leontes, King of Sicily. Leontes conceives a mad and causeless suspicion of his own wife Hermione, and charges one of the nobles of his own court (Camillo) to poison Polixenes, and is enraged to the verge of madness when the terrified Camillo takes ship and flees with Polixenes to the district of Bohemia, in South Italy.

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* Some persons, who are nothing if not critical, and yet feeble as critics, have flouted Shakespeare for giving Bohemia a sea-shore in The Winter's Tale. Alas! for the critic who blunders when finding fault! It was pointed out that the existence of a territory called Bohemia in Southern Italy had been mentioned in books which were in print before Shakespeare wrote The Winter's Tale. He was therefore making use of an existing legend, and not inventing the name of Polixenes' petty kingdom.

Camillo's flight confirms the mad suspicions of Leontes, and he becomes brutal to his Queen. He tells his courtiers:

Be it known,
From him that hath most cause to grieve it should be,
She's an adulteress.

Hermione.— Should a villain say so,
The most replenish'd villain in the world,
He were so much more villain:—you, my lord,
Do but mistake.

He coarsely rails at her, and says that she was privy to the escape of Polixenes and Camillo.

Hermione.— No, by my life,
Privy to none of this. How will this grieve you,
When you shall come to clearer knowledge, that
You thus have publish'd me! Gentle my lord,
You scarce can right me throughly then, to say
You did mistake.

Leontes.— No, no; if I mistake
In those foundations which I build upon,
The centre is not big enough to bear
A school-boy's top.—Away with her to prison:
He, who shall speak for her, is afar off guilty,
But that he speaks.

Hermione.— There's some ill planet reigns:
I must be patient, till the heavens look
With an aspect more favourable.—Good my lords,
I am not prone to weeping, as our sex
Commonly are; the want of which vain dew,
Perchance, shall dry your pities: but I have
That honourable grief lodg'd here, which burns
Worse than tears drown: 'Beseech you all, my lords,
With thoughts so qualified as your charities
Shall best instruct you, measure me;—and so
The king's will be perform'd.

Leontes.— Shall I be heard?
[*To the* Guards.

Hermione.—Who is't, that goes with me?—'Beseech your highness,
My women may be with me; for, you see,
My plight requires it. Do not weep, good fools;
There is no cause: when you shall know, your mistress

Has deserv'd prison; then abound in tears,
As I come out: this action, I now go on,
Is for my better grace.—Adieu, my lord;
I never wish'd to see you sorry; now,
I trust I shall.—My women, come; you have leave.

The mad procedure of Leontes shocks his courtiers, but he pacifies them by saying that he has sent eminent men, Cleomenes and Dion, to Apollo's Temple at Delphos, and by the word of the oracle he will be guided.

Shakespeare by many touches shows, however, that Leontes had ignoble ideas. He makes him meanly say:

Camillo and Polixenes
Laugh at me, make their pastime at my sorrow:
They should not laugh if I could reach them, nor
Shall she (Hermione) within my power.

In the prison, to which he has brutally committed her, Hermione brings forth a daughter. Paulina, wife of Antigonus, a councillor, visits the prison and bravely takes charge of the child, hoping to win the favour of Leontes. He, however, only rages at her.

Leontes.—I'll have thee burnt.
Paulina.— I care not:
It is an heretic that makes the fire,
Not she which burns in it. I'll not call you tyrant:
But this most cruel usage of your queen . . .
Savours of tyranny, and will ignoble make you,
Yea, scandalous to the world.

When she leaves the presence of Leontes he raves at her husband, his councillor Antigonus, and commands him to commit the infant to the flames.

If thou refuse,
And wilt encounter with my wrath, say so;
The bastard brains with these my proper hands
I shall dash out. Go, take it to the fire;
For thou sett'st on thy wife.

Antigonus.— I did not, sir:
These lords, my noble fellows, if they please,
Can clear me in 't.
1 *Lord.*— We can, my royal liege.
He is not guilty of her coming hither.
Leontes.—You are liars all.
1 *Lord.*—Beseech your lordship, give us better credit.

They entreat him to change his "horrible purpose, which must lead to some foul issue."

He changes it by ordering Antigonus to carry the child out of his dominions and leave it in some desolate place. Antigonus accepts the doom.

The cruel are often superstitious, and Leontes, when his frenzy seized him, had despatched two of his councillors, Cleomenes and Dion, to consult the oracle of Apollo at Delphos as to his duty. After absence of a few weeks they returned, and a solemn session was summoned to hear the decision of the God.

Hermione and her ladies are brought in, guarded.

Leontes.—Read the indictment.

Officer.—"Hermione, queen to the worthy Leontes, king of Sicilia, thou art here accused and arraigned of high treason, in committing adultery with Polixenes, king of Bohemia, and conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of our sovereign lord the king, thy royal husband: the pretence whereof being by circumstances partly laid open, thou, Hermione, contrary to the faith and allegiance of a true subject, did'st counsel and aid them, for their better safety, to fly away by night."

Hermione.—Since what I am to say, must be but that
Which contradicts my accusation; and
The testimony on my part, no other
But what comes from myself; it shall scarce boot me
To say, *Not guilty*; mine integrity,
Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it,
Be so receiv'd. But thus,—If powers divine
Behold our human actions, (as they do,)
I doubt not then, but innocence shall make
False accusation blush, and tyranny

Tremble at patience.—You, my lord, best know,
(Who least will seem to do so,) my past life
Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,
As I am now unhappy; which is more
Than history can pattern, though devis'd,
And play'd, to take spectators: For behold me,—
A fellow of the royal bed, which owe
A moiety of the throne, a great king's daughter,
The mother to a hopeful prince,—here standing,
To prate and talk for life, and honour, 'fore
Who please to come and hear. For life, I prize it,
As I weigh grief, which I would spare: for honour,
'Tis a derivative from me to mine,
And only that I stand for. I appeal
To your own conscience, sir, before Polixenes
Came to your court, how I was in your grace,
How merited to be so; since he came,
With what encounter so uncurrent I
Have strain'd, to appear thus: if one jot beyond
The bound of honour; or, in act, or will,
That way inclining, harden'd be the hearts
Of all that hear me, and my near'st of kin
Cry, Fie, upon my grave!

Leontes.— I ne'er heard yet,
That any of these bolder vices wanted
Less impudence to gainsay what they did,
Than to perform it first.

Hermione.— That's true enough;
Though 'tis a saying, sir, not due to me.

Leontes.—You will not own it.

Hermione.— More than mistress of,
Which comes to me in name of fault, I must not
At all acknowledge. For Polixenes,
(With whom I am accus'd,) I do confess,
I lov'd him, as in honour he requir'd;
With such a kind of love, as might become
A lady like me; with a love, even such,
So, and no other, as yourself commanded:
Which not to have done, I think, had been in me
Both disobedience and ingratitude,
To you, and toward your friend; whose love had spoke,
Even since it could speak, from an infant, freely,
That it was yours. Now, for conspiracy,

I know not how it tastes; though it be dish'd
For me to try how: all I know of it,
Is, that Camillo was an honest man;
And, why he left your court, the gods themselves,
Wotting no more than I, are ignorant.

Leontes.—You knew of his departure, as you know
What you have underta'en to do in his absence.

Hermione.—Sir,
You speak a language that I understand not:
My life stands in the level of your dreams,
Which I'll lay down.

Leontes.— Your actions are my dreams;
You had a bastard by Polixenes,
And I but dream'd it:—As you were past all shame,
(Those of your fact are so,) so past all truth:
Which to deny, concerns more than avails: for as
Thy brat hath been cast out, like to itself,
No father owning it, (which is, indeed,
More criminal in thee, than it,) so thou
Shalt feel our justice; in whose easiest passage,
Look for no less than death.

Hermione.— Sir, spare your threats;
The bug, which you would fright me with, I seek.
To me can life be no commodity:
The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,
I do give lost; for I do feel it gone,
But know not how it went: My second joy,
And first-fruits of my body, from his presence,
I am barr'd, like one infectious: My third comfort,
Starr'd most unluckily, is from my breast,
The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth,
Haled out to murder: Myself on every post
Proclaim'd a strumpet; with immodest hatred,
The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs
To women of all fashion:—lastly, hurried
Here to this place, i' the open air, before
I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,
Tell me what blessings I have here alive,
That I should fear to die? Therefore, proceed.
But yet hear this; mistake me not;—no! life,
I prize it not a straw:—but for mine honour,
(Which I would free,) if I shall be condemn'd
Upon surmises; all proofs sleeping else,

But what your jealousies awake; I tell you
'Tis rigour, and not law.—Your honours all,
I do refer me to the oracle;
Apollo be my judge.

1 *Lord.*— This your request
Is altogether just: therefore, bring forth,
And in Apollo's name, his oracle. [*Exeunt certain* Officers.

Hermione.—The emperor of Russia was my father:
O, that he were alive, and here beholding
His daughter's trial! that he did but see
The flatness of my misery; yet with eyes
Of pity, not revenge!

Re-enter OFFICERS, *with* CLEOMENES *and* DION.

Officer.—You here shall swear upon this sword of justice,
That you, Cleomenes and Dion, have
Been both at Delphos; and from thence have brought
This seal'd-up oracle, by the hand deliver'd
Of great Apollo's priest; and that, since then,
You have not dar'd to break the holy seal,
Nor read the secrets in 't.

Cleomenes and Dion.— All this we swear.

Leontes.—Break up the seals, and read.

Officer (reads).—"Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, his innocent babe truly begotten; and the king shall live without an heir, if that, which is lost, be not found."

Lords.—Now blessed be the great Apollo!

Hermione.— Praised!

Leon.—Hast thou read truth?

Officer.— Ay, my lord; even so
As it is here set down.

Leontes.—There is no truth at all i' the oracle:
The sessions shall proceed; this is mere falsehood.

Enter a SERVANT, *hastily.*

Servant.—My lord the king, the king!

Leontes.— What is the business?

Servant.—O sir, I shall be hated to report it:
The prince your son, with mere conceit and fear
Of the queen's speed, is gone.

Leontes.— How! gone?

Servant.— Is dead.

Leontes.—Apollo's angry; and the heavens themselves
Do strike at my injustice. [Hermione *faints.*
How now, there?
Paulina.—This news is mortal to the queen:—Look down,
And see what death is doing.
Leontes.— Take her hence:
Her heart is but o'ercharg'd; she will recover.—
I have too much believ'd mine own suspicion:—
'Beseech you, tenderly apply to her
Some remedies for life:—Apollo, pardon
[*Exeunt* Paulina *and* Ladies, *with* Hermione.
My great profaneness 'gainst thine oracle!
I'll reconcile me to Polixenes;
New woo my queen; recall the good Camillo;
Whom I proclaim a man of truth, of mercy:
For, being transported by my jealousies
To bloody thoughts and to revenge, I chose
Camillo for the minister, to poison
My friend Polixenes: which had been done,
But that the good mind of Camillo tardied
My swift command, though I with death, and with
Reward, did threaten and encourage him,
Not doing it, and being done: he, most humane,
And fill'd with honour, to my kingly guest
Unclasp'd my practice; quit his fortunes here,
Which you knew great; and to the certain hazard
Of all incertainties himself commended,
No richer than his honour:—How he glisters
Thorough my rust! and how his piety
Does my deeds make the blacker!

Re-enter PAULINA.

Paulina.— Woe the while!
O, cut my lace; lest my heart, cracking it,
Break too!
1 *Lord.*—What fit is this, good lady?
Paulina.—What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me?
What wheels? racks? fires? What flaying? boiling,
In leads, or oils? what old, or newer torture
Must I receive; whose every word deserves
To taste of thy most worst? Thy tyranny
Together working with thy jealousies,—
Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle
For girls of nine!—O, think, what they have done,

And then run mad, indeed; stark mad! for all
Thy by-gone fooleries were but spices of it.
That thou betray'dst Polixenes 'twas nothing;
That did but show thee, of a fool, inconstant,
And damnable ingrateful: nor was't much,
Thou would'st have poison'd good Camillo's honour,
To have him kill a king; poor trespasses,
More monstrous standing by: whereof I reckon
The casting forth to crows thy baby daughter,
To be or none, or little; though a devil
Would have shed water out of fire, ere done't:
Nor is't directly laid to thee, the death
Of the young prince; whose honourable thoughts
(Thoughts high for one so tender,) cleft the heart
That could conceive a gross and foolish sire
Blemish'd his gracious dam: this is not, no,
Laid to thy answer: But the last,—O, lords,
When I have said, cry, woe!—the queen, the queen,
The sweetest, dearest, creature's dead; and vengeance for 't
Not dropp'd down yet.

1 *Lord.*— The higher powers forbid!

Paulina.—I say, she's dead: I'll swear 't: if word, nor oath,
Prevail not, go and see: if you can bring
Tincture, or lustre, in her lip, her eye,
Heat outwardly, or breath within, I'll serve you
As I would do the gods,—But, O thou tyrant!
Do not repent these things; for they are heavier
Than all thy woes can stir: therefore betake thee
To nothing but despair. A thousand knees
Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,
Upon a barren mountain, and still winter
In storm perpetual, could not move the gods
To look that way thou wert.

Leontes.— Go on, go on:
Thou canst not speak too much; I have deserv'd
All tongues to talk their bitterest.

1 *Lord.*— Say no more:
Howe'er the business goes, you have made fault
I' the boldness of your speech.

Paulina.— I am sorry for 't;
All faults I make, when I shall come to know them,
I do repent: Alas, I have show'd too much
The rashness of a woman: he is touch'd

To the noble heart.—What's gone, and what's past help,
Should be past grief: Do not receive affliction
At my petition, I beseech you; rather
Let me be punish'd, that have minded you
Of what you should forget. Now, good my liege.
Sir, royal sir, forgive a foolish woman:
The love I bore your queen,—lo, fool, again!—
I'll speak of her no more, nor of your children;
I'll not remember you of my own lord,
Who is lost too: Take your patience to you,
And I'll say nothing.

Leontes.— Thou did'st speak but well,
When most the truth; which I receive much better
Than to be pitied of thee. Pr'ythee, bring me
To the dead bodies of my queen, and son:
One grave shall be for both; upon them shall
The causes of their death appear, unto
Our shame perpetual: Once a day I'll visit
The chapel where they lie; and tears shed there,
Shall be my recreation: So long as
Nature will bear up with this exercise,
So long I daily vow to use it. Come,
And lead me to these sorrows. [*Exeunt.*

Antigonus, meanwhile, has gone on his mission to cast away Hermione's new-born child. In a dream he is charged to name it Perdita.

He takes it to a desolate place on the shore of Bohemia, and leaves it there with rich gifts, which may tempt the finder to rear it well and call it Perdita.

He is torn to pieces by a bear, and the ship is destroyed in the sight of a clown, the son of an old shepherd, who finds Perdita with the rich gifts left with her by Antigonus, and says, "'Tis a lucky day, boy, and we'll do good deeds on it," as they proceed to bury Antigonus. The rich gifts enable him to rear Perdita in a becoming manner.

Then a gap of sixteen years is announced by the Chorus (in the name of Time), and the action of the play is resumed in the palace of Polixenes in Bohemia, where

Camillo is still his friend and councillor, though longing to see again the penitent Leontes in Sicily.

Polixenes is distressed by the repeated disappearances of his son Florizel, who, he says, is continually at the house of a "most homely shepherd, a man that from very nothing is grown into an unspeakable estate." Camillo agrees to accompany Polixenes in disguise to the shepherd's house in order to observe Florizel.

In the Fourth Act Florizel and Perdita (in the shepherd's house) are brought before the audience.

SCENE.—THE SHEPHERD'S COTTAGE.

Enter FLORIZEL *and* PERDITA.

Florizel.—These your unusual weeds to each part of you
Do give a life: no shepherdess, but Flora,
Peering in April's front. This your sheep-shearing
Is as a meeting of the petty gods,
And you the queen on 't.

Perdita.— Sir, my gracious lord,
To chide at your extremes, it not becomes me;
O, pardon, that I name them: your high self,
The gracious mark o' the land, you have obscur'd
With a swain's wearing; and me, poor lowly maid,
Most goddess-like prank'd up: But that our feasts
In every mess have folly, and the feeders
Digest it with a custom, I should blush
To see you so attir'd; sworn, I think,
To show myself a glass.

Florizel.— I bless the time,
When my good falcon made her flight across
Thy father's ground.

Perdita.— Now Jove afford you cause!
To me, the difference forges dread; your greatness
Hath not been us'd to fear. Even now I tremble
To think, your father, by some accident,
Should pass this way, as you did: O, the fates!
How would he look, to see his work, so noble,
Vilely bound up? What would he say? Or how
Should I, in these my borrow'd flaunts, behold
The sternness of his presence?

Florizel.— Apprehend
Nothing but jollity. The gods themselves,
Humbling their deities to love, have taken
The shapes of beasts upon them: Jupiter
Became a bull, and bellow'd; the green Neptune
A ram, and bleated: and the fire-rob'd god,
Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,
As I seem now: Their transformations
Were never for a piece of beauty rarer;
Nor in a way so chaste: since my desires
Run not before mine honour; nor my lusts
Burn hotter than my faith.

Perdita.— O but, dear sir,
Your resolution cannot hold, when 'tis
Oppos'd, as it must be, by the power o' the king;
One of these two must be necessities,
Which then will speak; that you must change this purpose,
Or I my life.

Florizel.— Thou dearest Perdita,
With these forc'd thoughts, I pr'ythee, darken not
The mirth o' the feast. Or I'll be thine, my fair,
Or not my father's: for I cannot be
Mine own, nor any thing to any, if
I be not thine: to this I am most constant,
Though destiny say, no. Be merry, gentle;
Strangle such thoughts as these, with any thing
That you behold the while. Your guests are coming:
Lift up your countenance; as it were the day
Of celebration of that nuptial, which
We two have sworn shall come.

Perdita.— O lady Fortune,
Stand you auspicious!

Enter SHEPHERD, *with* POLIXENES *and* CAMILLO *disguised;* CLOWN, MOPSA, DORCAS, *and others.*

Florizel.— See, your guests approach:
Address yourself to entertain them sprightly,
And let's be red with mirth.

Shepherd.—Fye, daughter! when my old wife liv'd, upon
This day, she was both pantler, butler, cook;
Both dame and servant: welcom'd all: serv'd all:
Would sing her song, and dance her turn; now here,
At upper end o' the table, now, i' the middle;

On his shoulder, and his: her face o' fire
With labour and the things she took to quench it,
She would to each one sip: You are retir'd,
As if you were a feasted one, and not
The hostess of the meeting: Pray you, bid
These unknown friends to us welcome: for it is
A way to make us better friends, more known.
Come, quench your blushes; and present yourself
That which you are, mistress o' the feast: Come on,
And bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing,
As your good flock shall prosper.

Perdita.— Welcome, sir! [*To* Polixenes.
It is my father's will, I should take on me
The hostess-ship o' the day:—You're welcome, sir!
[*To* Camillo.
Give me those flowers there, Dorcas.—Reverend sirs,
For you there's rosemary, and rue; these keep
Seeming, and savour, all the winter long:
Grace, and remembrance, be to you both,
And welcome to our shearing!

Polixenes.— Shepherdess,
(A fair one are you,) well you fit our ages
With flowers of winter.

Perdita.— Sir, the year growing ancient,—
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
Of trembling winter,—the fairest flowers o' the season
Are our carnations, and streak'd gillyflowers,
Which some call nature's bastards: of that kind
Our rustic garden's barren; and I care not
To get slips of them.

Polixenes.— Wherefore, gentle maiden,
Do you neglect them?

Perdita.— For I have heard it said,
There is an art, which, in their piedness, shares
With great creating nature.

Polixenes.— Say, there be;
Yet nature is made better by no mean,
But nature makes that mean: so, o'er that art,
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scion to the wildest stock;
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race: this is an art

Which does mend nature,—change it rather: but
The art itself is nature.

Perdita.— So it is.

Polixenes.—Then make your garden rich in gillyflowers,
And do not call them bastards.

Perdita.— I'll not put
The dibble in earth to set one slip of them:
No more than, were I painted, I would wish
This youth should say, 'twere well; and only therefore
Desire to breed by me.—Here's flowers for you;
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;
The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises weeping; these are flowers
Of middle summer, and, I think, they are given
To men of middle age: You are very welcome.

Camillo.—I should leave grazing, were I of your flock,
And only live by gazing.

Perdita.— Out, alas!
You'd be so lean, that blasts of January
Would blow you through and through.—Now, my fairest friend,
I would, I had some flowers o' the spring, that might
Become your time of day; and yours, and yours;
That wear upon your virgin branches yet
Your maidenheads growing:—O Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that, frighted, thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids; bold oxlips, and
The crown-imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one! O, these I lack,
To make you garlands of; and, my sweet friend,
To strew him o'er and o'er.

Florizel.— What? like a corse?

Perdita.—No, like a bank, for love to lie and play on;
Not like a corse: or if,—not to be buried,
But quick, and in mine arms. Come, take your flowers:
Methinks, I play as I have seen them do

In Whitsun pastorals: sure, this robe of mine
Does change my disposition.

Florizel.— What you do,
Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms;
Pray so; and, for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that; move still, still so, and own
No other function: each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds,
That all your acts are queens.

Perdita.— O Doricles,
Your praises are too large: but that your youth,
And the true blood, which fairly peeps through it,
Do plainly give you out an unstain'd shepherd;
With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,
You woo'd me the false way.

Florizel.— I think, you have
As little skill to fear, as I have purpose
To put you to 't.—But, come; our dance, I pray:
Your hand, my Perdita: so turtles pair,
That never mean to part.

Perdita.— I'll swear for 'em.

Polixenes.—This is the prettiest low-born lass, that ever
Ran on the green sward: nothing she does or seems,
But smacks of something greater than herself;
Too noble for this place.

Camillo.— He tells her something,
That makes her blood look out: Good sooth, she is
The queen of curds and cream.

Clown.— Come on, strike up.

Dorcas.—Mopsa must be your mistress: marry, garlic,
To mend her kissing with.

Mopsa.— Now, in good time!

Clown.—Not a word, a word; we stand upon our manners.—
Come, strike up. [*Music.*

Here a dance of SHEPHERDS *and* SHEPHERDESSES.

Polixenes.—Pray, good shepherd, what
Fair swain is this, which dances with your daughter?

Shepherd.—They call him Doricles; and he boasts himself
To have a worthy feeding; but I have it
Upon his own report, and I believe it;
He looks like sooth. He says, he loves my daughter;
I think so too: for never gaz'd the moon
Upon the water, as he'll stand, and read,
As 'twere, my daughter's eyes: and, to be plain,
I think, there is not half a kiss to choose,
Who loves another best.
Polixenes.— She dances featly.
Shepherd.—So she does any thing; though I report it,
That should be silent: if young Doricles
Do light upon her, she shall bring him that
Which he not dreams of.

The fun and frolic of the feast are brought amusingly before the visitors; Satyrs present a dance, and all seem merry, when Polixenes bethinks him that he must carry out the intention with which he came in disguise to mar his son's festivities. He says to Camillo (*aside*): "Is it not too far gone? 'Tis time to part them," and thus addresses Florizel:

How now, fair shepherd?
Your heart is full of something, that does take
Your mind from feasting. Sooth, when I was young,
And handed love, as you do, I was wont
To load my she with knacks: I would have ransack'd
The pedlar's silken treasury, and have pour'd it
To her acceptance; you have let him go,
And nothing marted with him. If your lass
Interpretation should abuse; and call this,
Your lack of love, or bounty; you were straited
For a reply, at least, if you make a care
Of happy holding her.
Florizel.— Old sir, I know
She prizes not such trifles as these are:
The gifts, she looks from me, are pack'd and lock'd
Up in my heart; which I have given already,
But not deliver'd.—O, hear me breathe my life
Before this ancient sir, who, it should seem,
Hath sometime lov'd: I take thy hand; this hand,

As soft as dove's down, and as white as it;
Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow,
That's bolted by the northern blasts twice o'er.

Polixenes.—What follows this?—
How prettily the young swain seems to wash
The hand, was fair before!—I have put you out:—
But, to your protestation; let me hear
What you profess.

Florizel.— Do, and be witness to 't.

Polixenes.—And this my neighbour too?

Florizel.— And he, and more
Than he, and men; the earth, the heavens, and all;
That,—were I crown'd the most imperial monarch,
Thereof most worthy; were I the fairest youth
That ever made eye swerve; had force, and knowledge,
More than was ever man's,—I would not prize them,
Without her love: for her, employ them all;
Commend them, and condemn them, to her service,
Or to their own perdition.

Polixenes.— Fairly offer'd.

Camillo.—This shows a sound affection.

Shepherd.— But, my daughter,
Say you the like to him?

Perdita.— I cannot speak
So well, nothing so well; no, nor mean better:
By the pattern of mine own thoughts I cut out
The purity of his.

Shepherd.— Take hands, a bargain;——
And, friends unknown, you shall bear witness to 't:
I give my daughter to him, and will make
Her portion equal his.

Florizel.— O, that must be
I' the virtue of your daughter: one being dead,
I shall have more than you can dream of yet;
Enough then for your wonder. But, come on,
Contract us 'fore these witnesses.

Shepherd.— Come, your hand;——
And, daughter, yours.

Polixenes.— Soft, swain, awhile, 'beseech you;
Have you a father?

Florizel.— I have: But what of him?

Polixenes.—Knows he of this?

Florizel.— He neither does, nor shall.
Polixenes.—Methinks, a father
Is, at the nuptial of his son, a guest
That best becomes the table. Pray you, once more;
Is not your father grown incapable
Of reasonable affairs? is he not stupid
With age, and altering rheums? Can he speak? hear?
Know man from man? dispute his own estate?
Lies he not bed-rid? and again does nothing,
But what he did being childish?
Florizel.— No, good sir;
He has his health, and ampler strength, indeed,
Than most have of his age.
Polixenes.— By my white beard,
You offer him, if this be so, a wrong
Something unfilial. Reason, my son
Should choose himself a wife; but as good reason,
The father, (all whose joy is nothing else
But fair posterity,) should hold some counsel
In such a business.
Florizel.— I yield all this;
But, for some other reasons, my grave sir,
Which 'tis not fit you know, I not acquaint
My father of this business.
Polixenes.— Let him know 't.
Florizel.—He shall not.
Polixenes.— Pr'ythee, let him.
Florizel.— No, he must not.
Shepherd.—Let him, my son; he shall not need to grieve
At knowing of thy choice.
Florizel.— Come, come, he must not:—
Mark our contract.
Polixenes.— Mark your divorce, young sir,
[*Discovering himself.*
Whom son I dare not call, thou art too base
To be acknowledg'd: Thou a sceptre's heir,
That thus affect'st a sheep-hook!—Thou old traitor,
I am sorry, that, by hanging thee, I can but
Shorten thy life one week.—And thou, fresh piece
Of excellent witchcraft; who, of force, must know
The royal fool thou cop'st with;—
Shepherd.— O, my heart!

Polixenes.—I'll have thy beauty scratched with briars, and made
More homely than thy state.—For thee, fond boy,—
If I may ever know, thou dost but sigh,
That thou no more shalt see this knack, (as never
I mean thou shalt,) we'll bar thee from succession;
Not hold thee of our blood, no, not our kin,
Far than Deucalion off;—Mark thou my words;
Follow us to the court.—Thou churl, for this time,
Though full of our displeasure, yet we free thee
From the dead blow of it.—And you, enchantment,—
Worthy enough a herdsman; yea, him too,
That makes himself, but for our honour therein,
Unworthy thee,—if ever, henceforth, thou
These rural latches to his entrance open,
Or hoop his body more with thy embraces,
I will devise a death as cruel for thee,
As thou art tender to 't. [*Exit.*

Perdita.— Even here undone!
I was not much afeard: for once, or twice,
I was about to speak; and tell him plainly,
The self same sun, that shines upon his court,
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on alike.—Will 't please you, sir, be gone? [*To* Florizel.
I told you, what would come of this: beseech you,
Of your own state take care: this dream of mine,—
Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch further,
But milk my ewes, and weep.

Camillo.— Why, how now, father?
Speak, ere thou diest.

Shepherd.— I cannot speak, nor think,
Nor dare to know that which I know.—O, sir, [*To* Florizel.
You have undone a man of fourscore three,
That thought to fill his grave in quiet; yea,
To die upon the bed my father died,
To lie close by his honest bones: but now
Some hangman must put on my shroud, and lay me
Where no priest shovels in dust.—O cursed wretch! [*To* Perdita.
That knew'st this was the prince, and would'st adventure
To mingle faith with him.—Undone! undone!
If I might die within this hour, I have liv'd
To die when I desire. [*Exit.*

Florizel.— Why look you so upon me?

I am sorry, not afeard; delay'd,
But nothing alter'd: what I was, I am:
More straining on, for plucking back; not following
My leash unwillingly.

Camillo.— Gracious my lord,
You know your father's temper: at this time
He will allow no speech,—which, I do guess,
You do not purpose to him;—and as hardly
Will he endure your sight as yet, I fear:
Then, till the fury of his highness settle,
Come not before him.

Florizel.— I not purpose it.
I think, Camillo?

Camillo.— Even he, my lord.

Perdita.—How often have I told you, 'twould be thus!
How often said, my dignity would last
But till 'twere known!

Florizel.— It cannot fail, but by
The violation of my faith; and then
Let nature crush the sides o' the earth together,
And mar the seeds within! Lift up thy looks:
From my succession wipe me, father! I
Am heir to my affection.

Camillo.— Be advis'd.

Florizel.—I am; and by my fancy: if my reason
Will thereto be obedient, I have reason;
If not, my senses, better pleas'd with madness,
Do bid it welcome.

Camillo.— This is desperate, sir.

Florizel.—So call it: but it does fulfil my vow;
I needs must think it honesty. Camillo,
Not for Bohemia, nor the pomp that may
Be thereat glean'd; for all the sun sees, or
The close earth wombs, or the profound seas hide
In unknown fathoms, will I break my oath
To this my fair belov'd: Therefore, I pray you,
As you've e'er been my father's honour'd friend,
When he shall miss me, (as, in faith, I mean not
To see him any more,) cast your good counsels
Upon his passion. Let myself and fortune,
Tug for the time to come. This you may know,
And so deliver,—I am put to sea
With her, whom here I cannot hold on shore.

He goes to sea and arrives in Sicily, and his father follows him. The terror of the old shepherd meanwhile has brought to light the fact that the Perdita left on the beach in the storm was the daughter of Hermione; and thus the dutiful care of Antigonus was rewarded after his death.

Florizel, however, had arrived at the Court of Leontes before these facts were unravelled. When his father, Polixenes, in anger was about to pursue his runaway son, the fears of the old shepherd made him produce the proofs, and on the arrival of Polixenes in Sicily the truth was established, and the scene of its acceptance is thus described by one of the spectators:

1 *Gentleman.*—I was by at the opening of the fardel, heard the old shepherd deliver the manner how he found it: whereupon, after a little amazedness, we were all commanded out of the chamber; only this, methought I heard the shepherd say, he found the child.

Autolycus.—I would most gladly know the issue of it.

1 *Gentleman.*—I make a broken delivery of the business:—but the changes I perceived in the king, and Camillo, were very notes of admiration: they seemed almost, with staring on one another, to tear the cases of their eyes; there was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture; they looked, as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed: A notable passion of wonder appeared in them: but the wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say, if the importance were joy, or sorrow: but in the extremity of the one, it must needs be.

Enter another GENTLEMAN.

Here comes a gentleman, that, happily, knows more: The news, Rogero?

2 *Gentleman.*—Nothing but bonfires: The oracle is fulfilled; the king's daughter is found: such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour, that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it.

Enter a third GENTLEMAN.

Here comes the Lady Paulina's steward; he can deliver you more.—How goes it now, sir? this news, which is called true, is so like an old tale, that the verity of it is in strong suspicion. Has the king found his heir?

3 *Gentleman.*—Most true; if ever truth were pregnant by circumstance; that, which you hear, you'll swear you see, there is such unity in the proofs. The mantle of queen Hermione:—her jewel about the neck of it:—the letters of Antigonus, found with it, which they know to be his character:—the majesty of the creature, in resemblance of the mother;—the affection of nobleness, which nature shows above her breeding,—and many other evidences, proclaim her, with all certainty, to be the king's daughter. Did you see the meeting of the two kings?

2 *Gentleman.*—No.

3 *Gentleman.*—Then have you lost a sight, which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of. There might you have beheld one joy crown another; so, and in such manner, that, it seemed, sorrow wept to take leave of them; for their joy waded in tears. There was casting up of eyes, holding up of hands; with countenance of such distraction, that they were to be known by garment, not by favour. Our king, being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his found daughter; as if that joy were now become a loss, cries, *O, thy mother, thy mother!* then asks Bohemia forgiveness; then embraces his son-in-law; then again worries he his daughter, with clipping her; now he thanks the old shepherd, which stands by, like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns. I never heard of such another encounter, which lames report to follow it, and undoes description to do it.

2 *Gentleman.*—What, pray you, became of Antigonus, that carried hence the child?

3 *Gentleman.*—Like an old tale still; which will have matter to rehearse, though credit be asleep, and not an ear open: He was torn to pieces with a bear: this avouches the shepherd's son; who has not only his innocence (which seems much,) to justify him, but a handkerchief, and rings, of his, that Paulina knows.

1 *Gentleman.*—What became of his bark, and his followers?

3 *Gentleman.*—Wrecked, the same instant of their master's death; and in view of the shepherd: so that all the instruments, which aided to expose the child, were even then lost, when it was found. But, O, the noble combat, that, 'twixt joy and sorrow, was fought in Paulina! She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband; another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled: She lifted the princess from the earth; and so locks her in embracing, as if she would pin her to her heart, that she might no more be in danger of losing.

1 *Gentleman.*—The dignity of this act was worth the audience of kings and princes; for by such was it acted.

3 *Gentleman.*—One of the prettiest touches of all, and that which angled for mine eyes (caught the water, though not the fish,) was, when

at the relation of the queen's death, with the manner how she came to it, (bravely confessed, and lamented by the king,) how attentiveness wounded his daughter; till, from one sign of dolour to another, she did, with an *alas!* I would fain say, bleed tears; for, I am sure, my heart wept blood. Who was most marble there, changed colour; some swooned, all sorrowed: if all the world could have seen it, the woe had been universal.

1 *Gentleman.*—Are they returned to the court?

3 *Gentleman.*—No: the princess hearing of her mother's statue, which is in the keeping of Paulina,—a piece many years in doing, and now newly performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano; who, had he himself eternity, and could put breath into his work, would beguile nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape: he so near to Hermione hath done Hermione, that, they say, one would speak to her, and stand in hope of answer: thither, with all greediness of affection, are they gone; and there they intend to sup.

2 *Gentleman.*—I thought, she had some great matter there in hand; for she hath privately, twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione, visited that removed house. Shall we thither, and with our company piece the rejoicing?

1 *Gentleman.*—Who would be thence, that has the benefit of access? every wink of an eye, some new grace will be born: our absence makes us unthrifty to our knowledge. Let's along. [*Exeunt* Gentlemen.

The last scene is in a chapel in Paulina's house, in which Leontes, Polixenes, Florizel, Perdita, Camillo, Paulina, and others are assembled. Having admired many objects, Leontes says to Paulina:—

But we saw not
That which my daughter came to look upon,
The statue of her mother.

Paulina.— As she liv'd peerless,
So her dead likeness, I do well believe,
Excels whatever yet you look'd upon,
Or hand of man hath done; therefore I keep it
Lonely, apart: But here it is: prepare
To see the life as lively mock'd, as ever
Still sleep mock'd death: behold; and say, 'tis well.
[Paulina *undraws a curtain, and discovers a statue.*
I like your silence, it the more shows off
Your wonder: But yet speak;—first, you, my liege.
Comes it not something near?

Leontes.— Her natural posture!—
Chide me, dear stone; that I may say, indeed,
Thou art Hermione: or, rather, thou art she,
In thy not chiding; for she was as tender,
As infancy, and grace.—But yet, Paulina,
Hermione was not so much wrinkled; nothing
So aged, as this seems.
Polixenes.— O, not by much.
Paulina.—So much the more our carver's excellence;
Which lets go by some sixteen years, and makes her
As she liv'd now.
Leontes.— As now she might have done,
So much to my good comfort, as it is
Now piercing to my soul. O, thus she stood,
Even with such life of majesty, (warm life,
As now it coldly stands,) when first I woo'd her!
I am asham'd: Does not the stone rebuke me,
For being more stone than it?—O, royal piece,
There's magic in thy majesty; which has
My evils conjur'd to remembrance; and
From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
Standing like stone with thee!
Perdita.— And give me leave;
And do not say, 'tis superstition, that
I kneel, and then implore her blessing.—Lady,
Dear queen, that ended when I but began,
Give me that hand of yours, to kiss.
Paulina.— O, patience!
The statue is but newly fix'd, the colour's
Not dry.
Camillo.—My lord, your sorrow was too sore laid on:
Which sixteen winters cannot blow away,
So many summers, dry: scarce any joy
Did ever so long live; no sorrow,
But kill'd itself much sooner.
Polixenes.— Dear my brother,
Let him, that was the cause of this, have power
To take off so much grief from you, as he
Will piece up in himself.
Paulina.— Indeed, my lord,
If I had thought, the sight of my poor image
Would thus have wrought you (for the stone is mine,)
I'd not have show'd it.

Leontes.— Do not draw the curtain.
Paulina.—No longer shall you gaze on 't; lest your fancy
May think anon, it moves.
Leontes.— Let be, let be.
Would I were dead, but that, methinks, already—
What was he, that did make it?—See, my lord,
Would you not deem it breath'd? and that those veins
Did verily bear blood?
Polixenes.— Masterly done:
The very life seems warm upon her lip.
Leontes.—The fixture of her eye has motion in 't,
As we are mock'd with art.
Paulina.— I'll draw the curtain;
My lord's almost so far transported, that
He'll think anon, it lives.
Leontes.— O sweet Paulina,
Make me to think so twenty years together;
No settled senses of the world can match
The pleasure of that madness. Let 't alone.
Paulina.—I am sorry, sir, I have thus far stirr'd you: but
I could afflict you further.
Leontes.— Do, Paulina;
For this affliction has a taste as sweet
As any cordial comfort.—Still, methinks,
There is an air comes from her: What fine chisel
Could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me,
For I will kiss her.
Paulina.— Good my lord, forbear:
The ruddiness upon her lip is wet;
You'll mar it, if you kiss it; stain your own
With oily painting: Shall I draw the curtain?
Leontes.—No, not these twenty years.
Perdita.— So long could I
Stand by a looker on.
Paulina.— Either forbear,
Quit presently the chapel; or resolve you
For more amazement. If you can behold it,
I'll make the statue move indeed; descend,
And take you by the hand: but then you'll think,
(Which I protest against,) I am assisted
By wicked powers.
Leontes.— What you can make her do,
I am content to look on: what to speak,

I am content to hear; for 'tis as easy
To make her speak, as move.

Paulina.— It is requir'd,
You do awake your faith. Then, all stand still;
Or those, that think it is unlawful business
I am about, let them depart.

Leontes.— Proceed;
No foot shall stir.

Paulina.— Music; awake her: strike.— [*Music.*
'Tis time; descend; be stone no more: approach;
Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come;
I'll fill your grave up: stir; nay, come away;
Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him
Dear life redeems you.—You perceive, she stirs;
[Hermione *comes down from the pedestal.*
Start not: her actions shall be holy, as,
You hear, my spell is lawful: do not shun her,
Until you see her die again; for then
You kill her double. Nay, present your hand:
When she was young, you woo'd her; now, in age,
Is she become the suitor.

Leontes.— O, she's warm! [*Embracing her.*
If this be magic, let it be an art
Lawful as eating.

Polixenes.— She embraces him.

Camillo.—She hangs about his neck;
If she pertain to life, let her speak too.

Polixenes.—Ay, and make 't manifest where she has liv'd,
Or, how stol'n from the dead?

Paulina.— That she is living,
Were it but told you, should be hooted at
Like an old tale; but it appears, she lives,
Though yet she speak not. Mark a little while.—
Please you to interpose, fair madam; kneel,
And pray your mother's blessing.—Turn, good lady;
Our Perdita is found.
[*Presenting* Perdita, *who kneels to* Hermione.

Hermione.— You gods, look down,
And from your sacred vials pour your graces
Upon my daughter's head!—Tell me, mine own,
Where has thou been preserv'd? where liv'd? how found
Thy father's court? for thou shalt hear, that I,—
Knowing by Paulina, that the oracle

Gave hope thou wast in being,—have preserv'd
Myself, to see the issue.

Paulina.— There's time enough for that;
Lest they desire, upon this push to trouble
Your joys with like relation.—Go together,
You precious winners all; your exultation
Partake to every one. I, an old turtle,
Will wing me to some wither'd bough; and there
My mate, that's never to be found again,
Lament till I am lost.

The extracts from The Winter's Tale have been copious, but it is to be hoped that no reader of this treatise will wish that they had been shorter.

The play when produced in London was highly popular, and has maintained its hold on the stage up to the present time.

The Tempest is the latest production of Shakespeare's imagination, and is framed in such a manner as to give full scope to it. At the same time he preserved strict conformity to the rules of art, which required that the action of a drama should be so restricted as to place and time that all the scenes represented might actually have occurred at the scene and within the time allotted to them.

That in many of his plays he paid no regard to such rules must have given zest to his own and his friends' amusement when The Tempest produced, in one small island, and in the brief span of a few hours, a drama strictly conforming with those rules.

But in the creation of the characters who were to move upon the contracted scene Shakespeare gave full scope to his imagination.

Prospero, Duke of Milan, absorbed in high pursuits and thus "neglecting worldly ends," gave opportunity to his false brother, Antonio, to intrigue against the rightful ruler.

"He being thus lorded," Prospero tells his daughter Miranda,

> Not only with what my revenue yielded,
> But what my power might else exact, like one
> Who having unto truth, by telling of it,
> Made such a sinner of his memory
> To credit his own lie,—

and became a traitor.

Making terms with Alonso, King of Naples, an enemy to Prospero, Antonio causes Prospero and his infant child, Miranda, to be seized, conveyed to the seashore, and committed to the waves some leagues from land in "a rotten carcase" of a boat.

> *Miranda.*—How came we ashore?
> *Prospero.*—By Providence divine,
> Some food we had, and some fresh water, that
> A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,
> Out of his charity, (who being then appointed
> Master of this design,) did give us; with
> Rich garments, linens, stuffs, and necessaries,
> Which since have steaded much; so, of his gentleness,
> Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me
> From mine own library with volumes that
> I prize above my dukedom.
> *Miranda.*— Would I might
> But ever see that man! . . .
> *Prospero.*—Here in this island we arrived, and here
> Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit
> Than other princess' can that have more time
> For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful.
> *Miranda.*—Heavens thank you for it! And now, I pray you, sir,
> For still 'tis beating in my mind, your reason
> For raising this sea-storm.
> *Prospero.*— Know thus far forth
> By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune
> Now, my dear lady, hath mine enemies
> Brought to this shore; and by my prescience
> I find my zenith doth depend upon
> A most auspicious star, whose influence
> If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes

Will ever after droop. Here cease more questions;
Thou art inclined to sleep; 'tis a good dulness,
And give it way. I know thou can'st not choose.
[*Miranda sleeps.*
Come away, servant, come. I am ready now,
Approach, my Ariel, come.

Enter ARIEL.

Ariel.—All hail, great master! grave sir, hail! I come
To answer thy best pleasure; be it to fly,
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
On the curl'd clouds, to thy strong bidding task
Ariel and all his quality.

Prospero.— Hast thou, spirit,
Performed to point the tempest that I bade thee?

Ariel.—To every article. I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flamed amazement: sometimes I'd divide
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards, and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors
O' the dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary
And sight-outrunning were not: the fire, the cracks
Of sulphurous roaring, the most mighty Neptune
Seem'd to besiege, and make his bold waves tremble;
Yea, his dread trident shake.

Prospero.— My brave spirit!
Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil
Would not infect his reason?

Ariel.— Not a soul
But felt a fever of the mad, and play'd
Some tricks of desperation: all, but mariners,
Plung'd in the foaming brine, and quit the vessel,
Then all a-fire with me: the king's son, Ferdinand,
With hair up-starting (then like reeds, not hair,)
Was the first man that leap'd; cried, *Hell is empty,*
And all the devils are here.

Prospero.— Why, that's my spirit!
But was not this nigh shore?

Ariel.— Close by, my master.

Prospero.—But are they, Ariel, safe?

Ariel.— Not a hair perish'd;
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,

But fresher than before: and, as thou bad'st me,
In troops I have dispers'd them 'bout the isle:
The king's son have I landed by himself;
Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs,
In an odd angle of the isle, and sitting,
His arms in this sad knot.

Prospero.— Of the king's ship,
The mariners, say, how thou hast dispos'd,
And all the rest o' the fleet.

Ariel.— Safely in harbour
Is the king's ship; in the deep nook, where once
Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew
From the still-vex'd Bermoothes, there she's hid:
The mariners all under hatches stowed;
Whom, with a charm join'd to their suffer'd labour,
I have left asleep: and for the rest o' the fleet,
Which I dispers'd, they all have met again;
And are upon the Mediterranean flote,
Bound sadly home for Naples;
Supposing that they saw the king's ship wreck'd,
And his great person perish.

Prospero.— Ariel, thy charge
Exactly is perform'd; but there's more work:
What is the time o' the day?

Ariel.— Past the mid season.

Prospero.—At least two glasses: the time 'twixt six and now,
Must by us both be spent most preciously.

Ariel.—Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,
Let me remember thee what thou hast promis'd,
Which is not yet perform'd me.

Prospero.— How now? moody?
What is 't thou canst demand?

Ariel.— My liberty.

Prospero.—Before the time be out? no more.

Ariel.— I pray thee
Remember, I have done thee worthy service;
Told thee no lies, made no mistakings, serv'd
Without or grudge, or grumblings: thou did'st promise
To bate me a full year.

Prospero.— Dost thou forget
From what a torment I did free thee?

Ariel.— No.

Prospero.—Thou dost; and think'st

It much to tread the ooze of the salt deep;
To run upon the sharp wind of the north;
To do me business in the veins o' the earth,
When it is bak'd with frost.

Ariel.— I do not, sir.

Prospero.—Thou liest, malignant thing! Has thou forgot
The foul witch Sycorax, who, with age and envy,
Was grown into a hoop? hast thou forgot her?

Ariel.—No, sir.

Prospero.—Thou hast: where was she born? speak; tell me.

Ariel.—Sir, in Argier.

Prospero.— O, was she so? I must,
Once in a month, recount what thou hast been,
Which thou forget'st. This damn'd witch, Sycorax,
For mischiefs manifold, and sorceries terrible
To enter human hearing, from Argier,
Thou know'st, was banish'd; for one thing she did,
They would not take her life: Is not this true?

Ariel.—Ay, sir.

Prospero.—This blue-ey'd hag was hither brought with child,
And here was left by the sailors: Thou, my slave,
As thou report'st thyself, wast then her servant:
And, for thou wast a spirit too delicate
To act her earthy and abhorr'd commands,
Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,
By help of her more potent ministers,
And in her most unmitigable rage,
Into a cloven pine; within which rift
Imprison'd, thou did'st painfully remain
A dozen years; within which space she died,
And left thee there; where thou did'st vent thy groans,
As fast as mill-wheels strike: Then was this island,
(Save for the son that she did litter here,
A freckled whelp, hag-born,) not honour'd with
A human shape.

Ariel.— Yes; Caliban her son.

Prospero.—Dull thing, I say so; he, that Caliban,
Whom now I keep in service. Thou best know'st
What torment I did find thee in: thy groans
Did make wolves howl, and penetrate the breasts
Of ever-angry bears; it was a torment
To lay upon the damn'd, which Sycorax
Could not again undo; it was mine art,

When I arriv'd, and heard thee, that made gape
The pine, and let thee out.
Ariel.— I thank thee, master.
Prospero.—If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak,
And peg thee in his knotty entrails, till
Thou hast howl'd away twelve winters.
Ariel.— Pardon, master:
I will be correspondent to command,
And do my sprighting gently.
Prospero.— Do so; and after two days
I will discharge thee.
Ariel.— That's my noble master!
What shall I do? say what? what shall I do?
Prospero.—Go make thyself like to a nymph of the sea;
Be subject to no sight but thine and mine; invisible
To every eye-ball else. Go, take this shape,
And hither come in 't: go hence, with diligence. [*Exit* Ariel.
Awake, dear heart, awake! thou hast slept well;
Awake!
Miranda.—The strangeness of your story put
Heaviness in me.
Prospero.— Shake it off: come on;
We'll visit Caliban, my slave, who never
Yields us kind answer.
Miranda.— 'Tis a villain, sir,
I do not love to look on.
Prospero.— But, as 'tis,
We cannot miss him: he does make our fire,
Fetch in our wood; and serves in offices
That profit us. What, ho! slave! Caliban!
Thou earth, thou! speak.
Caliban [*within*].— There's wood enough within.
Prospero.—Come forth, I say; there's other business for thee;
Come, thou tortoise! when?
Re-enter ARIEL, *like a water-nymph.*
Fine apparition! My quaint Ariel,
Hark in thine ear.
Ariel.— My lord, it shall be done. [*Exit.*
Prospero.—Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself
Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!
Enter CALIBAN.
Caliban.—As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
With raven's feather from unwholesome fen,

Drop on you both! a south-west blow on ye,
And blister you all o'er!

Prospero.—For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins
Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,
All exercise on thee: thou shalt be pinch'd
As thick as honey-comb, each pinch more stinging
Than bees that made them.

Caliban.— I must eat my dinner.
This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou camest first,
Thou strok'dst me, and mad'st much of me; would'st give me
Water with berries in 't; and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night: and then I lov'd thee,
And show'd thee all the qualities o' the isle,
The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place, and fertile;
Cursed be I that did so!—All the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest of the island.

Prospero.— Thou most lying slave,
Whom stripes may move, not kindness: I have us'd thee,
Filth as thou art, with human care; and lodg'd thee
In mine own cell, till thou did'st seek to violate
The honour of my child.

Caliban.— O ho, O ho!—'would it had been done!
Thou did'st prevent me; I had peopled else
This isle with Calibans.

Prospero.— Abhorred slave;
Which any print of goodness will not take,
Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or other: when thou did'st not, savage,
Know thine own meaning, but would'st gabble like
A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
With words that made them known. But thy vile race
Though thou did'st learn, had that in 't which good natures
Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou
Deservedly confin'd into this rock,
Who had'st deserv'd more than a prison.

Caliban.—You taught me language; and my profit on 't
Is, I know how to curse: the red plague rid you,
For learning me your language!

Prospero.— Hag-seed, hence!
Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou wert best,
To answer other business. Shrug'st thou, malice?
If thou neglect'st, or dost unwillingly
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps;
Fill all thy bones with aches; make thee roar,
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

Caliban.— No, pray thee!—
[*Aside.*] I must obey: his art is of such power,
It would control my dam's god, Setebos,
And make a vassal of him.

Prospero.— So, slave; hence! [*Exit* Caliban.

Re-enter ARIEL *invisible, playing and singing;* FERDINAND *following him.*

ARIEL'S SONG.

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands:
Court'sied when you have, and kiss'd,
The wild waves whist,
Foot it featly here and there;
And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.
Hark, hark!
Burthen.—Bowgh, wowgh. [*Dispersedly.*
The watch-dogs bark:
Burthen.—Bowgh, wowgh. [*Dispersedly.*
Hark, hark! I hear
The strain of strutting chanticlere,
Cry, Cock-a-doodle-doo.

Ferdinand.—Where should this music be? i' the air, or the earth?
It sounds no more:—and sure, it waits upon
Some god of the island. Sitting on a bank,
Weeping again the king my father's wreck,
This music crept by me upon the waters;
Allaying both their fury, and my passion,
With its sweet air: thence I have follow'd it,
Or it hath drawn me rather.—But 'tis gone.
Now it begins again.

ARIEL *sings.*

Full fathom five thy father lies;
  Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
  Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-Nympths hourly ring his knell:
Hark! now I hear them,—ding-dong, bell.

Ferdinand.—The ditty does remember my drown'd father;
This is no mortal business, nor no sound
That the earth owes:—I hear it now above me.

Prospero.—The fringed curtains of thine eye advance,
And say, what thou see'st yond'.

Miranda.— What is 't? a spirit?
Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,
It carries a brave form.--But 'tis a spirit.

Prospero.—No, wench; it eats and sleeps, and hath such senses
As we have, such. This gallant, which thou see'st,
Was in the wreck; and but he's something stain'd
With grief, that's beauty's canker, thou might'st call him
A goodly person: he hath lost his fellows,
And strays about to find them.

Miranda.— I might call him
A thing divine; for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.

Prospero.— It goes on, [*Aside.*
As my soul prompts it:—Spirit, fine spirit! I'll free thee
Within two days for this.

Ferdinand.— Most sure, the goddess
On whom these airs attend!—Vouchsafe, my prayer
May know, if you remain upon this island;
And that you will some good instruction give,
How I may bear me here: My prime request,
Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!
If you be maid, or no?

Miranda.— No wonder, sir;
But, certainly a maid.

Ferdinand.— My language! heavens!—
I am the best of them that speak this speech,
Were I but where 'tis spoken.

Prospero.— How! the best?
What wert thou, if the king of Naples heard thee?

Ferdinand.—A single thing, as I am now, that wonders
To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me;
And, that he does, I weep: myself am Naples;
Who with mine eyes, ne'er since at ebb, beheld
The king my father wreck'd.

Miranda.— Alack, for mercy!

Ferdinand.—Yes, faith, and all his lords; the duke of Milan,
And his brave son, being twain.

Prospero [*aside.*]— The duke of Milan,
And his more braver daughter, could control thee,
If now 'twere fit to do 't.—At the first sight
They have chang'd eyes:—Delicate Ariel,
I'll set thee free for this!—A word, good sir;
I fear, you have done yourself some wrong: a word.

Miranda.—Why speaks my father so ungently? This
Is the third man that e'er I saw; the first
That e'er I sigh'd for: pity move my father
To be inclin'd my way!

Ferdinand.— O, if a virgin,
And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you
The queen of Naples.

Prospero.— Soft, sir: one word more.—
They are both in either's powers: but this swift business
I must uneasy make, lest too light winning
Make the prize light.—One word more; I charge thee,
That thou attend me: thou dost here usurp
The name thou ow'st not; and hast put thyself
Upon this island, as a spy, to win it
From me, the lord on 't.

Ferdinand.— No, as I am a man.

Miranda.—There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple:
If the ill spirit have so fair an house,
Good things will strive to dwell with 't.

Prospero.— Follow me.— [*To* Ferdinand.
Speak not you for him; he's a traitor.—Come,
I'll manacle thy neck and feet together:
Sea-water shalt thou drink, thy food shall be
The fresh-brook muscles, wither'd roots, and husks
Wherein the acorn cradled: Follow.

Ferdinand.— No;
I will resist such entertainment, till
Mine enemy has more power. [*He draws.*

Miranda.— O dear father,
Make not too rash a trial of him, for
He's gentle, and not fearful.
Prospero.— What, I say,
My foot my tutor!—Put thy sword up, traitor;
Who mak'st a show, but dar'st not strike, thy conscience
Is so possessed with guilt: come from thy ward;
For I can here disarm thee with this stick,
And make thy weapon drop.
Miranda.— Beseech you, father!
Prospero.—Hence; hang not on my garments.
Miranda.— Sir, have pity;
I'll be his surety.
Prospero.— Silence: one word more
Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee. What!
An advocate for an impostor? hush!
Thou think'st there are no more such shapes as he,
Having seen but him and Caliban: foolish wench!
To the most of men this is a Caliban,
And they to him are angels.
Miranda.— My affections
Are then most humble; I have no ambition
To see a goodlier man.
Prospero.— Come on; obey: [*To* Ferdinando.
Thy nerves are in their infancy again,
And have no vigour in them.
Ferdinand.— So they are:
My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up.
My father's loss, the weakness which I feel,
The wreck of all my friends, or this man's threats,
To whom I am subdued, are but light to me,
Might I but through my prison once a day
Behold this maid: all corners else o' the earth
Let liberty make use of; space enough
Have I in such a prison.
Prospero [*aside.*]— It works:—Come on.—
Thou hast done well, fine Ariel!—Follow me.—
[*To* Ferdinand *and* Miranda.
Hark, what thou else shalt do me. [*To* Ariel.
Miranda.— Be of comfort;
My father's of a better nature, sir,
Than he appears by speech; this is unwonted,
Which now came from him.

Prospero.— Thou shalt be as free
As mountain winds: but then exactly do
All points of my command.
Ariel.— To the syllable.
Prospero.—Come, follow: speak not for him. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ANOTHER PART OF THE ISLAND.

Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, GONZALO, ADRIAN, FRANCISCO, *and others.*

Gonzalo.—'Beseech you, sir, be merry: you have cause
(So have we all) of joy; for our escape
Is much beyond our loss. Our hint of woe
Is common: every day, some sailor's wife,
The masters of some merchant, and the merchant,
Have just our theme of woe: but for the miracle,
I mean our preservation, few in millions
Can speak like us: then wisely, good sir, weigh
Our sorrow with our comfort.
Alonso.— Pr'ythee, peace.
Sebastian.—He receives comfort like cold porridge.
Antonio.—The visitor will not give him o'er so.
Sebastian.—Look, he's winding up the watch of his wit;
By and bye it will strike.
Gonzalo.—When every grief is entertain'd, that's offer'd,
Comes to the entertainer—
Sebastian.— A dollar.
Gonzalo.—Dolour comes to him, indeed; you have spoken truer than you purposed.
Sebastian.—You have taken it wiselier than I meant you should.

. . . . . .

Alonso.—You cram these words into mine ears, against
The stomach of my sense: 'would I had never
Married my daughter there! for, coming thence,
My son is lost; and, in my rate, she too,
Who is so far from Italy remov'd,
I ne'er again shall see her. O thou mine heir
Of Naples and of Milan, what strange fish
Hath made his meal on thee?
Francisco.— Sir, he may live;
I saw him beat the surges under him,
And ride upon their backs; he trod the water,

Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted
The surge most swoln that met him: his bold head
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar'd
Himself with his good arms in lusty stroke
To the shore, that o'er his wave-worn basis bow'd,
As stooping to relieve him: I doubt not,
He came alive to land.

Alonso.— No, no, he's gone.

Sebastian.—Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,
That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,
But rather lose her to an African;
Where she, at least, is banish'd from your eye,
Who hath cause to wet the grief on 't.

Alonso.— Pr'ythee, peace.

Sebastian.—You were kneel'd to, and importun'd otherwise
By all of us; and the fair soul herself
Weigh'd, between lothness and obedience, at
Which end o' the beam she'd bow. We have lost your son,
I fear, for ever: Milan and Naples have
More widows in them of this business' making,
Than we bring men to comfort them: the fault's
Your own.

Alonso.—So is the dearest of the loss.

Gonzalo.— My lord Sebastian,
The truth you speak doth lack some gentleness,
And time to speak it in: you rub the sore,
When you should bring the plaster.

Sebastian.— Very well.

Antonio.—And most chirurgeonly.

Gonzalo.—It is foul weather in us all, good sir,
When you are cloudy.

Sebastian.— Foul weather?

Antonio.— Very foul.

Gonzalo.—Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,—

Antonio.—He'd sow it with nettle-seed.

Sebastian.— Or docks, or mallows.

Gonzalo.—And were the king on it, What would I do?

Sebastian.—'Scape being drunk, for want of wine.

Gonzalo.—I' the commonwealth, I would by contraries
Execute all things: for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,

Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none:
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil:
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too; but innocent and pure:
No sovereignty:—

Sebastian.— And yet he would be king on 't.

Antonio.—The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

Gonzalo.—All things in common nature should produce,
Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
Of its own kind, all foizon, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.

Sebastian.—No marrying 'mong his subjects?

Gonzalo.—I would with such perfection govern, sir, to excel the golden age.

A word may be said here about the exquisite banter, in this passage, of some sentences in Montaigne's Essays, a translation of which by Florio (a client of the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's patron) was published in London in 1603. Montaigne* wrote of a

Nation en laquelle il n'y a aucune espèce de trafique, nulle connaissance de lettres, nulle science de nombres, nul nom de magistrat, ny de supériorité politique, nul usage de service, de richesse ou de pauvreté, nuls contracts, nulles successions, nuls partages, nulles occupations qu'oysifes, nul respect de parenté que commun, nuls vestements, nulle agriculture, nul metal, nul usage de vin ou de bled; les paroles mêmes qui signifient le mensonge, la trahison, la dissimulation, l'avarice, l'envie, la detraction, le pardon inouyes.

When Gonzalo has, after the manner of Montaigne, described his model community, Alonso says:—"Pr'ythee, no more; thou dost talk nothing to me;" and Gonzalo replies:

I do well believe your highness; and did it to minister occasion to these gentlemen, who are of such sensible and nimble lungs, that they always use to laugh at nothing.

* Essais de Montaigne, Paris. Livre I., Chapitre xxx., p. 179.

Prospero's magical power extends to a knowledge of the designs of Antonio and Sebastian, who are about to murder Alonso, when Ariel appears and rouses Gonzalo, who wakes to see the traitors with their swords drawn, and the catastrophe is averted.

Prospero meanwhile is observing the course of love between his daughter and Ferdinand, upon whom he has imposed the laborious task of carrying logs of wood.

Miranda wishes to lighten the task by helping Ferdinand.

Enter MIRANDA; *and* PROSPERO *at a distance.*

Miranda.— Alas, now! pray you,
Work not so hard: I would, the lightning had
Burnt up those logs, that you are enjoin'd to pile!
Pray, set it down, and rest you: when this burns,
'Twill weep for having wearied you. My father
Is hard at study; pray now, rest yourself;
He's safe for these three hours.

Ferdinand.— O most dear mistress,
The sun will set, before I shall discharge
What I must strive to do.

Miranda.— If you'll sit down,
I'll bear your logs the while: pray, give me that:
I'll carry it to the pile.

Ferdinand.— No, precious creature:
I had rather crack my sinews, break my back,
Than you should such dishonour undergo,
While I sit lazy by.

Miranda.— It would become me
As well as it does you: and I should do it
With much more ease; for my good will is to it,
And yours it is against.

Prospero [*aside*].— Poor worm! thou art infected;
This visitation shows it.

Miranda.— You look wearily.

Ferdinand.—No, noble mistress; 'tis fresh morning with me,
When you are by at night. I do beseech you,
(Chiefly, that I might set it in my prayers,)
What is your name?

Miranda.— Miranda:—O my father,
I have broke your hest to say so!

Ferdinand.— Admir'd Miranda
Indeed, the top of admiration; worth
What's dearest to the world! Full many a lady
I have ey'd with best regard; and many a time
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent ear: for several virtues
Have I lik'd several women; never any
With so full soul, but some defect in her
Did quarrel with the noblest grace she ow'd,
And put it to the foil: But you, O you,
So perfect, and so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best!

Miranda.— I do not know
One of my sex; no woman's face remember,
Save, from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen
More that I may call men, than you, good friend,
And my dear father: how features are abroad,
I am skill-less of; but, by my modesty,
(The jewel in my dower,) I would not wish
Any companion in the world but you;
Nor can imagination form a shape,
Besides yourself, to like of. But I prattle
Something too wildly, and my father's precepts
I therein do forget.

Ferdinand.— I am in my condition,
A prince, Miranda; I do think, a king;
(I would, not so!) and would no more endure
This wooden slavery, than to suffer
The flesh-fly blow my mouth.—Hear my soul speak;—
The very instant that I saw you, did
My heart fly to your service; there resides,
To make me slave to it; and for your sake,
Am I this patient log-man.

Miranda.— Do you love me?

Ferdinand.—O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound,
And crown what I profess with kind event,
If I speak true; if hollowly, invert
What best is boded me, to mischief! I,
Beyond all limit of what else i' the world,
Do love, prize, honour you.

Miranda.— I am a fool,
To weep at what I am glad of.
Prospero.— Fair encounter
On that which breeds between them!
Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace
Ferdinand.— Wherefore weep you?
Miranda.—At mine unworthiness, that dare not offer
What I desire to give; and much less take,
What I shall die to want. But this is trifling;
And all the more it seeks to hide itself,
The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning!
And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!
I am your wife, if you will marry me;
If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow
You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,
Whether you will or no.
Ferdinand.— My mistress, dearest,
And I thus humble ever.
Miranda.— My husband then?
Ferdinand.—Ay, with a heart as willing
As bondage e'er of freedom: here's my hand.
Miranda.—And mine with my heart in 't: And now farewell,
Till half an hour hence.
Ferdinand.— A thousand! thousand!
[*Exeunt* Ferdinand *and* Miranda.
Prospero.—So glad of this as they, I cannot be,
Who are surpris'd with all; but my rejoicing
At nothing can be more. I'll to my book;
For yet, ere supper time, must I perform
Much business appertaining. [*Exit.*

With the underplot of Caliban and Stephano, the drunken butler, to murder Prospero, though droll on the stage, it is unnecessary to deal in these pages, but the mock banquet which Prospero by the agency of Ariel puts before the visitors must be mentioned.

When they are on the point of relieving their hunger, Ariel, like a harpy, claps his wings, the banquet vanishes, and Ariel thus addresses Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio:

You are three men of sin, whom destiny
(That hath to instrument this lower world,

And what is in 't), the never-surfeited sea
Hath causéd to belch up; and on this island
Where man doth not inhabit; you 'mongst men
Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad;
And even with such like valour, men hang and drown
Their proper selves.

[*Seeing* Alonso, Sebastian, &c., *draw their swords.*

You fools! I and my fellows
Are ministers of fate; the elements
Of whom your swords are temper'd, may as well
Wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd-at stabs
Kill the still-closing waters, as diminish
One dowle that's in my plume; my fellow-ministers
Are like invulnerable: if you could hurt,
Your swords are now too massy for your strengths,
And will not be uplifted: But, remember,
(For that's my business to you,) that you three
From Milan did supplant good Prospero;
Expos'd unto the sea, which hath requit it,
Him, and his innocent child; for which foul deed
The powers, delaying, not forgetting, have
Incens'd the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,
Against your peace: Thee of thy son, Alonso,
They have bereft; and do pronounce by me,
Lingering perdition (worse than any death
Can be at once) shall step by step attend
You, and your ways: whose wraths to guard you from
(Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls
Upon your heads,) is nothing, but heart's sorrow,
And a clear life ensuing.

He vanishes in thunder: then, to soft music, enter the Shapes again, and dance with mops and mowes, and carry out the table.

Prospero [*aside.*]—Bravely the figure of this harpy hast thou
Perform'd, my Ariel; a grace it had, devouring:
Of my instruction hast thou nothing 'bated,
In what thou had'st to say: so, with good life,
And observation strange, my meaner ministers
Their several kinds have done: my high charms work,
And these, mine enemies, are all knit up
In their distractions: they now are in my power;
And in these fits I leave them, while I visit
Young Ferdinand, (who they suppose is drown'd,)

And his and my lov'd darling.

Gonzalo.—I' the name of something holy, sir, why stand you
In this strange stare?

Alonso.— O, it is monstrous! monstrous!
Methought, the billows spoke, and told me of it;
The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd
The name of Prosper; it did bass my trespass.
Therefore my son i' the ooze is bedded; and
I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded,
And with him there lie mudded. [*Exit.*

Sebastian.— But one fiend at a time,
I'll fight their legions o'er.

Antonio.— I'll be thy second.
[*Exeunt* Sebastian *and* Antonio.

Gonzalo.—All three of them are desperate; their great guilt,
Like poison given to work a great time after,
Now 'gins to bite the spirits:—I do beseech you,
That are of suppler joints, follow them swiftly,
And hinder them from what this ecstasy
May now provoke them to.

Adrian.— Follow, I pray you. [*Exeunt.*

True to his custom of introducing low comic characters to win the applause of "the groundlings," Shakespeare provides Stephano, the drunken butler of the King of Naples, Trinculo, the jester, and Caliban, whose droll adventures and punishment there is no need to describe here.

In the Fourth Act Prospero explains to Prince Ferdinand the reasons for the apparently harsh treatment which Ferdinand had received.

If I have too austerely punished you,
Your compensation makes amends; for I
Have given you here a thread of mine own life,
Or that for which I live; whom once again
I tender to thy hand: all thy vexations
Were but my trials of thy love, and thou
Hast strangely stood the test: here, afore heaven,
I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand,

Do not smile at me that I boast her off,
For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise,
And make it halt behind her.

Ferdinand.— I do believe it,
Against an oracle.

Prospero.—Then as my gift, and thine own acquisition
Worthily purchased, take my daughter.

The dainty Ariel then introduces a show in which Iris, Juno, and Ceres take part in blessing the lovers.

Juno.—Honour, riches, marriage blessing,
Long continuance, and increasing,
Hourly joys be still upon you!
Juno sings her blessings on you.

Ceres.—Earth's increase, and foizon plenty,
Barns and garners never empty;
Vines with clustering bunches growing;
Plants with goodly burthen bowing;
Spring come to you at the farthest,
In the very end of harvest!
Scarcity and want shall shun you;
Ceres' blessing so is on you.

Ferdinand.—This is a most majestic vision, and
Harmonious charmingly. May I be bold
To think these spirits?

Prospero.— Spirits, which by mine art
I have from their confines called to enact
My present fancies.

Ferdinand.— Let me live here ever:
So rare a wonder'd father, and a wife,
Makes this place Paradise.

The action of the play being strictly confined within the space of a few hours, the Fifth Act presents only one scene, which winds up all events to the satisfaction of Prospero and his friends.

It may be well to present it almost in full, containing, as it does, the last words written by Shakespeare.

SCENE I.—BEFORE THE CELL OF PROSPERO.

Enter PROSPERO *in his magic robes; and* ARIEL.

Prospero.—Now does my project gather to a head:
My charms crack not; my spirits obey; and time
Goes upright with his carriage. How's the day?
Ariel.—On the sixth hour; at which time, my lord,
You said our work should cease.
Prospero.— I did say so,
When first I rais'd the tempest. Say, my spirit,
How fared the king and his?
Ariel.— Confin'd together
In the same fashion as you gave in charge;
Just as you left them, sir; all prisoners
In the lime-grove which weather-fends your cell;
They cannot budge, till your release. The king,
His brother, and yours, abide all three distracted;
And the remainder mourning over them,
Brim-full of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly
Him you term'd, sir, *The good old lord, Gonzalo;*
His tears run down his beard, like winter's drops
From eaves of reeds; your charm so strongly works them,
That if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender.
Prospero.— Dost thou think so, spirit?
Ariel.—Mine would, sir, were I human.
Prospero.— And mine shall.
Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions? and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
Passion as they, be kindlier mov'd than thou art?
Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
Yet, with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
Do I take part: the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further: Go, release them, Ariel;
My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,
And they shall be themselves.
Ariel.— I'll fetch them, sir. [*Exit.*
Prospero.—Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves;
And ye, that on the sands with printless foot

Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him,
When he comes back; you demi-puppets, that
By moon-shine do the green-sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you, whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms; that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid
(Weak masters though ye be,) I have be-dimm'd
The noon-tide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt: the strong bas'd promontory
Have I made shake; and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar: graves, at my command,
Have wak'd their sleepers; oped, and let them forth
By my so potent art. But this rough magic
I here abjure: and, when I have requir'd
Some heavenly music, (which even now I do,)
To work mine end upon their senses, that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And, deeper than did ever plummet sound,
I'll drown my book. [*Solemn music.*

Re-enter ARIEL: *after him,* ALONSO, *with a frantic gesture, attended by* GONZALO; SEBASTIAN *and* ANTONIO *in like manner, attended by* ADRIAN *and* FRANCISCO: *they all enter the circle which* PROSPERO *had made, and there stand charmed: which* PROSPERO *observing, speaks.*

A solemn air, and the best comforter
To an unsettled fancy, cure thy brains,
Now useless, boil'd within thy skull! There stand,
For you are spell-stopp'd.—
Holy Gonzalo, honourable man,
Mine eyes, even sociable to the show of thine,
Fall fellowly drops.—The charm dissolves apace;
And as the morning steals upon the night,
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason.—O my good Gonzalo,
My true preserver, and a loyal sir
To him thou follow'st! I will pay thy graces
Home, both in word and deed.—Most cruelly

Did'st thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter:
Thy brother was a furtherer in the act;—
Thou'rt pinched for 't now, Sebastian.—Flesh and blood,
You brother mine, that entertain'd ambition,
Expell'd remorse and nature; who, with Sebastian,
(Whose inward pinches therefore are most strong,)
Would here have kill'd your king; I do forgive thee,
Unnatural though thou art!—Their understanding
Begins to swell; and the approaching tide
Will shortly fill the reasonable shore,
That now lies foul and muddy. Not one of them,
That yet looks on me, or would know me:—Ariel,
Fetch me the hat and rapier in my cell; [*Exit* Ariel.
I will dis-case me, and myself present,
As I was sometime Milan:—quickly, spirit;
Thou shalt ere long be free.

ARIEL *re-enters, singing, and helps to attire* PROSPERO.

Ariel.— Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie:
There I couch, when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly,
After summer, merrily:
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

Prospero.—Why, that's my dainty Ariel: I shall miss thee;
But yet thou shalt have freedom: so, so, so.—
To the king's ship, invisible as thou art:
There shalt thou find the mariners asleep
Under the hatches; the master, and the boatswain,
Being awake, enforce them to this place;
And presently, I pr'ythee.

Ariel.—I drink the air before me, and return
Or e'er your pulse twice beat. [*Exit* Ariel.

Gonzalo.—All torment, trouble, wonder, and amazement
Inhabits here: Some heavenly power guide us
Out of this fearful country!

Prospero.— Behold, sir king,
The wronged duke of Milan, Prospero:
For more assurance that a living prince
Does now speak to thee, I embrace thy body;
And to thee, and thy company, I bid
A hearty welcome.

Alonso.— Whe'r thou beest he, or no,
Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me,
As late I have been, I not know: thy pulse
Beats, as of flesh and blood; and, since I saw thee,
The affliction of my mind amends, with which,
I fear, a madness held me: this must crave
(An' if this be at all,) a most strange story.
Thy dukedom I resign; and do entreat
Thou pardon me my wrongs:—But how should Prospero
Be living, and be here?

Prospero.— First, noble friend,
Let me embrace thine age; whose honour cannot
Be measur'd, or confin'd. .

Gonzalo.— Whether this be,
Or be not, I'll not swear.

Prospero.— You do yet taste
Some subtilties o' the isle, that will not let you
Believe things certain:—Welcome, my friends all:—
But you, my brace of lords, were I so minded,
[*Aside to* Sebastian *and* Antonio.
I here could pluck his highness' frown upon you,
And justify you traitors; at this time
I'll tell no tales.

Sebastian.— The devil speaks in him. [*Aside.*

Prospero.— No:—
For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive
Thy rankest fault,—all of them; and require
My dukedom of thee, which, perforce, I know,
Thou must restore.

Alonso.— If thou beest Prospero,
Give us particulars of thy preservation:
How thou hast met us here, who three hours since
Were wreck'd upon this shore; where I have lost,
How sharp the point of this remembrance is!
My dear son Ferdinand.

Prospero.— I am woe for 't, sir.

Alonso.—Irreparable is the loss; and Patience
Says it is past her cure.

Prospero.— I rather think,
You have not sought her help: of whose soft grace
For the like loss, I have her sovereign aid,
And rest myself content.

Alonso.— You the like loss?
Prospero.—As great to me, as late; and, portable
To make the dear loss, have I means much weaker
Than you may call to comfort you; for I
Have lost my daughter.
Alonso.— A daughter?
O heavens! that they were living both in Naples,
The king and queen there! that they were, I wish
Myself were mudded in that oozy bed
Where my son lies. When did you lose your daughter?
Prospero.—In this last tempest. I perceive, these lords
At this encounter do so much admire,
That they devour their reason; and scarce think
Their eyes do offices of truth, their words
Are natural breath: but, howsoe'er you have
Been justled from your senses, know for certain,
That I am Prospero, and that very duke
Which was thrust forth of Milan; who most strangely
Upon this shore, where you were wreck'd, was landed,
To be the lord on 't. No more yet of this;
For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
Not a relation for a breakfast, nor
Befitting this first meeting. Welcome, sir;
This cell's my court: here have I few attendants,
And subjects none abroad: pray you, look in.
My dukedom since you have given me again,
I will requite you with as good a thing;
At least, bring forth a wonder, to content ye,
As much as me my dukedom.

The entrance of the cell opens, and discovers FERDINAND *and* MIRANDA *playing at chess.*

Miranda.—Sweet lord, you play me false.
Ferdinand.— No, my dearest love,
I would not for the world.
Miranda.—Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,
And I would call it fair play.
Alonso.— If this prove
A vision of the island, one dear son
Shall I twice lose.
Sebastian.— A most high miracle!
Ferdinand.—Though the seas threaten, they are merciful:
I have curs'd them without cause.
[Ferdinand *kneels to* Alonso.

Alonso.— Now all the blessings
Of a glad father compass thee about!
Arise, and say how thou cam'st here.

Miranda.— O! wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in 't!

Prospero.— 'Tis new to thee.

Alonso.—What is this maid, with whom thou wast at play?
Your eld'st acquaintance cannot be three hours:
Is she the goddess that hath sever'd us,
And brought us thus together?

Ferdinand.— Sir, she's mortal;
But, by immortal providence, she's mine;
I chose her, when I could not ask my father
For his advice; nor thought I had one: she
Is daughter to this famous duke of Milan,
Of whom so often I have heard renown,
But never saw before; of whom I have
Receiv'd a second life, and second father
This lady makes him to me.

Alonso.— I am hers:
But O, how oddly will it sound, that I
Must ask my child forgiveness!

Prospero.— There, sir, stop;
Let us not burden our remembrances
With a heaviness that's gone.

Gonzalo.— I have inly wept,
Or should have spoke ere this. Look down, you gods,
And on this couple drop a blessed crown;
For it is you, that have chalk'd forth the way
Which brought us hither!

Alonso.— I say, Amen, Gonzalo!

Gonzalo.—Was Milan thrust from Milan, that his issue
Should become kings of Naples? O, rejoice
Beyond a common joy; and set it down
With gold on lasting pillars: In one voyage
Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis;
And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife,
Where he himself was lost; Prospero his dukedom,
In a poor isle; and all of us, ourselves,
When no man was his own.

Alonso.— Give me your hands: [*To* Ferdinand *and* Miranda.
Let grief and sorrow still embrace his heart,
That doth not wish you joy!

Gonzalo.— Be 't so! Amen!

Re-enter Ariel, *with the Master and Boatswain amazedly following.*

O look, sir, look, sir; here are more of us!
I prophesied, if a gallows were on land,
This fellow could not drown: Now, blasphemy,
That swear'st grace o'erboard, not an oath on shore?
Hast thou no mouth by land? What is the news?

Boatswain.—The best news is, that we have safely found
Our king, and company: the next our ship,—
Which, but three glasses since, we gave out split,—
Is tight, and yare, and bravely rigg'd, as when
We first put out to sea.

Ariel (aside).— Sir, all this service
Have I done since I went.

Prospero (aside).— My tricksy spirit!

Alonso.—These are not natural events; they strengthen,
From strange to stranger:—Say, how came you hither?

Boatswain.—If I did think, sir, I were well awake,
I'd strive to tell you. We were dead of sleep,
And (how, we know not,) all clapp'd under hatches,
Where, but even now, with strange and several noises
Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains,
And more diversity of sounds, all horrible,
We were awak'd; straightway, at liberty:
Where we, in all her trim, freshly beheld
Our royal, good, and gallant ship; our master
Capering to eye her: On a trice, so please you,
Even in a dream, were we divided from them,
And were brought moping hither.

Ariel (aside).— Was 't well done?

Prospero (aside).—Bravely, my diligence. Thou shalt be free.

Alonso.—This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod,
And there is in this business more than nature
Was ever conduct of: some oracle
Must rectify our knowledge.

Prospero.— Sir, my liege,
Do not infest your mind with beating on
The strangeness of this business: at pick'd leisure,

Which shall be shortly, single I'll resolve you
(Which to you shall seem probable,) of every
These happen'd accidents: till when, be cheerful,
And think of each thing well.—Come hither, spirit;
[*Aside to* Ariel.
Set Caliban and his companions free:
Untie the spell. [*Exit* Ariel.] How fares my gracious sir?
There are yet missing of your company
Some few odd lads that you remember not.

Re-enter ARIEL, *driving in* CALIBAN, STEPHANO, *and* TRINCULO, *in their stolen apparel.*

Stephano.—Every man shift for all the rest, and let no man take care for himself; for all is but fortune:—Coragio, bully-monster, Coragio!

Trinculo.—If these be true spies which I wear in my head, here's a goodly sight.

Caliban.—O Setebos, these be brave spirits, indeed!
How fine my master is! I am afraid
He will chastise me.

Sebastian.— Ha, ha!
What things are these, my lord Antonio!
Will money buy them?

Antonio.—Very like; one of them
Is a plain fish, and, no doubt, marketable.

Prospero.—Mark but the badges of these men, my lords,
Then say, if they be true:—This mis-shapen knave,
His mother was a witch; and one so strong
That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,
And deal in her command, without her power:
These three have robb'd me; and this demi-devil
(For he's a bastard one,) had plotted with them
To take my life: two of these fellows you
Must know, and own; this thing of darkness I
Acknowledge mine.

Caliban.— I shall be pinch'd to death.

Alonso.—Is not this Stephano, my drunken butler?

Sebastian.—He is drunk now: where had he wine?

Alonso.—And Trinculo is reeling ripe: where should they
Find this grand liquor that hath gilded them?—
How cam'st thou in this pickle?

Trinculo.—I have been in such a pickle, since I saw you last, that, I fear me, will never out of my bones: I shall not fear fly-blowing.

Sebastian.—Why, how now, Stephano?

Stephano.—O, touch me not; I am not Stephano, but a cramp.

Prospero.—You'd be a king of the isle, sirrah?

Stephano.—I should have been a sore one then.

Alonso.—This is as strange a thing as e'er I look'd on.

[*Pointing to* Caliban.

Prospero.—He is as disproportion'd in his manners,
As in his shape.—Go, sirrah, to my cell;
Take with you your companions; as you look
To have my pardon, trim it handsomely.

Caliban.—Ay, that I will; and I'll be wise hereafter,
And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass
Was I, to take this drunkard for a god,
And worship this dull fool?

Prospero.— Go to; away!

Alonso.—Hence, and bestow your luggage where you found it.

Sebastian.—Or stole it, rather.

[*Exeunt* Caliban, Stephano, *and* Trinculo.

Prospero.—Sir, I invite your highness, and your train,
To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest
For this one night; which (part of it,) I'll waste
With such discourse, as, I not doubt, shall make it
Go quick away: the story of my life,
And the particular accidents, gone by,
Since I came to this isle: and in the morn,
I'll bring you to your ship, and so to Naples
Where I have hope to see the nuptial
Of these our dear-beloved solemniz'd;
And thence retire me to my Milan, where
Every third thought shall be my grave.

Alonso.— I long
To hear the story of your life, which must
Take the ear strangely.

Prospero.— I'll deliver all;
And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales,
And sail so expeditious, that shall catch
Your royal fleet far off.—My Ariel;—chick,—
That is thy charge; then to the elements
Be free, and fare thou well!—[*Aside.*] Please you draw near.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.—*Spoken by Prospero.*

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have 's my own;
Which is most faint: now 'tis true,
I must be here confined by you,
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
Since I have my dukedom got,
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
In this bare island, by your spell;
But release me from my bands,
With the help of your good hands.
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please. Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be reliev'd by prayer;
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
Let your indulgence set me free.

It is, perhaps, well to present in full the last scene put before his countrymen by Shakespeare.

The farewell words of a friend are warmly cherished in the mind.

There is something pathetic, almost personal, in the close:

> As you from crimes would pardoned be,
> Let your indulgence set me free.

The eloquent American, J. R. Lowell, invited attention to them as the "solemn words of the great enchanter, who was now bidding farewell to the scene of his triumphs. For in Prospero shall we not recognize the artist himself?"

Mr. Lanier writes:—"Did it ever occur to you that the Epilogue of The Tempest becomes marvellously tender and

seemly if we conceive it as spoken by Shakespeare in his own character? The more I read it as such, the more thrilling it becomes to me."

Here may end the summary of Shakespeare's work: an imperfect summary no doubt, but, nevertheless, a candid attempt to present a picture of it. "What a crown would be stricken from the brow of England," Archbishop Trench said, "if Shakespeare had never lived nor sung."

If these poor pages should lead others to a closer study of Shakespeare's, they will have accomplished the intention of their author.

Shakespeare's frequent visits to Stratford, after he became the owner of New Place in 1597, have been mentioned. His London avocations, however, had the first claim upon his time, and demanded his presence there.

More than half of his plays were produced after he became wealthy. Prosperity did not abate his ardour or his power to put the fruits of his imagination before his countrymen. A glance at the list of his plays will show how many of his greatest works were produced after 1597.

Moreover, he often had to appear as an actor. In that character he appeared not only in his own plays, but as a friendly co-operator. Mr. Sidney Lee records (p. 44) that "Shakespeare's name stands first on the list of those who took part in the original performances of Ben Jonson's Every Man in his Humour (1598). In the original edition of Jonson's Sejanus (1603) the actor's names are arranged in two columns, and Shakespeare's name heads the second column, standing parallel with Burbage's, which heads the first."

As a popular actor in his own plays, also, Shakespeare must have frequently been on the stage when he would have preferred to be composing in his study.

But his visits to Stratford became gradually more frequent and prolonged, and finally, in 1611, he made New Place his regular abode, though he doubtless paid visits to London occasionally.

His will contained proof that his "messuage" at "Blackfriars, in London," was in 1616 occupied by John Robinson.

The close of his career is chronicled in the end of the first chapter of this work, which deals with his life at Stratford-on-Avon.

CHAPTER III.

Shakespeare's Religion and his Teaching.

Few documents signed by Shakespeare have been preserved. One of them, fortunately, is his Will, and it contains his confession of faith, made while "in perfect health and memory," on the 25th March, 1616. "First I commend my soul into the hands of God my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting; and my body to the earth, whereof it is made."

The remaining clauses, ten in number, disposing of his property, &c., are added as "Items," each being so headed.

It would not be easy to frame a clause more categorically including Shakespeare as a loyal member of the Church of England, whose 6th Article declares that—"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." *

* Ought it not to appear incredible that in 1903 a newspaper in Australia declared in a leading article that Shakespeare, "whose observation and understanding of mankind was most profound, who is the delight and inspiration of every school and every sect alike, and who communicates more elevation of spirit than any forty essayists, is the very man of whom no Furness or Furnivall has been able to discover

In King John there are many references to the strong religious feeling which pervaded men's minds in the time of Queen Elizabeth. Access to documents then kept secret, but in later days subjected to scrutiny, has proved that attempts upon Elizabeth's life were abetted not only by the King of Spain, but by Popes; and her trusty agent, Walsingham, did not fail to procure secret information and to thwart many of them at the time.

One Pope had promulgated a Bull to depose Elizabeth, and the English Parliament had retorted by making it high treason to impugn her title.

The massacre of the Huguenots in France had excited horror in England, not allayed by the fact that Pope Gregory XIII. struck off medals in honour of it.

Emissary priests from Rome had been executed for refusing to recognize the Queen as lawful sovereign of the realm.

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whether he was (Roman) Catholic or Protestant?" It may be feared that a Life of Shakespeare published in England has tended to foster ignorance on the subject by alleging that "The religious exordium of the will is in conventional phraseology, and gives no clue to Shakespeare's personal religious opinions. What those opinions were we have neither the means nor the warrant for discussing." By rejecting Shakespeare's own affirmation we can, of course, deprive ourselves of the best means of deciding the question. But we have no right to reject it. It may be, and probably is, the fact that the form adopted in his Will was one which other testators adopted. This is but natural, and I have myself known conscientious instances of the kind. But that fact does not weaken the position that the testator's mind goes with his hand in the act of signing. Common justice requires and decency demands that Shakespeare should not be accused (if one may borrow his own language) of "playing fast and loose with faith, and jesting with heaven;" and the accusation wears a worse grace when it is remembered that thirty-four years before it was published Archbishop Trench had (in his sermon at Stratford on the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth) solemnly cited the declaration in the Will as a proof of Shakespeare's religious belief.

In 1588 the Spanish Armada made its futile attack upon England, and in 1591 Sir Richard Grenville lost his life, but gained immortal honour for his country and himself, fighting "with a joyful and quiet mind, for his country, Queen, religion, and honour."

Such being the atmosphere of the times, one can easily conceive the enthusiasm with which the actor (probably Shakespeare's "fellow" (Richard Burbage) was hailed, when he said—

> Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
> So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,
> To charge me to an answér, as the pope.
> Tell him this tale; and from the mouth of England
> Add this much more,—that no Italian priest
> Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;
> But as we, under Heaven, are supreme head,
> So, under Him, that great supremacy,
> Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
> Without the assistance of a mortal hand:
> So tell the pope, all reverence set apart
> To him and his usurped authority.
>
> *K. Philip.*—Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.
>
> *K. John.*—Though you, and all the kings of Christendom,
> Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,
> Dreading the curse that money may buy out;
> And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,
> Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,
> Who, in that sale, sells pardon from himself:
> Though you, and all the rest, so grossly led,
> This juggling priestcraft with revenue cherish;
> Yet I alone, alone do me oppose
> Against the pope and count his friends my foes.

In the Second Part of Henry VI. (Act III., Scene 2) we have the King saying:—

> O thou, that judgest all things, stay my thoughts;
> My thoughts that labour to persuade my soul
> Some violent hands were laid on Humphrey's life!

If my suspect be false, forgive me, God,
For judgment only doth belong to thee. . . .
Warwick.—As surely as my soul intends to live
With that dread King, that took our state upon him,
To free us from his Father's wrathful curse,
I do believe.

. . . . . .

K. Henry.—What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted?
Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just;
And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

In the same play (Act III., Scene 3) Shakespeare makes Salisbury say—

Now, by the death of Him who died for all.*

At the deathbed of Cardinal Beaufort torn by agony and fears, the King in horror exclaims (Beaufort being the King's great-uncle):—

O! thou eternal Mover of the heavens,
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
O, beat away the busy meddling fiend
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
And from his bosom purge this black despair! . . .
Lord cardinal, if thou think'st on Heaven's bliss,
Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.
He dies, and makes no sign. O God, forgive him!
Warwick.—So bad a death argues a monstrous life.
K. Henry.—Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all. . . .
And let us all to meditation.

Warlike as is the drama of Henry V., there are compact sermons in it. In the First Act the King says:

For we have now no thought in us but France,
Save those to God, that run before our business;

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* It is quite true that Shakespeare's personal convictions cannot be inferred from the words which he puts in the mouths of his characters. But the above line is in such strict conformity with the first clause in Shakespeare's Will, written twenty years afterwards, that it claims notice.

and the terrible moral involved in Dame Quickly's advice to Falstaff on his deathbed—

> Now I to comfort him, bid him a' should not think of God,

has been already cited.

Early in the play the King is made to say:

> God Almighty!
> There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
> Would men observingly distil it out;—

and though many persons censure Shakespeare for presenting low characters on the stage, it must not be forgotten that he brings them to shame, and thus in some degree makes a moral even of the base.

The night before the battle of Agincourt the King preaches a sermon appropriate to the occasion and to the lives of all who fight for their country:

> Every subject's duty is the king's, but every subject's soul is his own. Therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed, wash every mote out of his conscience; and dying so, death is to him advantage; or not dying, the time was blessedly lost, wherein such preparation was gained: and in him that escapes, it were not sin to think that making God so free an offer, He let him outlive that day to see His greatness and to teach others how they should prepare.

The same warrior King on the morning of Agincourt penitently prays:

> Not to-day, O Lord,
> O, not to-day, think not upon the fault
> My father made in compassing the crown!
> I Richard's body have interred anew,
> And on it have bestowed more contrite tears.
> . . . More will I do,
> Though all that I can do is nothing worth,
> Since that my penitence comes after all,
> Imploring pardon.

Nor does Shakespeare confine his hero's humility to the hour of danger. When the battle has been won he makes him say:

> O God, thy arm was here;
> And not to us, but to thy arm alone
> Ascribe we all. . . . Take it God, for it is none but thine!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> *Fluellen.*—Is it not lawful, your majesty, to tell how many is killed?
> *K. Henry.*—Yes, captain, but with this acknowledgment—
> That God fought for us.
> *Fluellen.*—Yes, my conscience, He did us great good.

The Merchant of Venice abounds with moral and religious teaching.

> *Portia.*—If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.

Shylock, the evil genius of the drama, thus limns his own character, while describing Antonio (Act I., Scene 3):

> How like a fawning publican he looks!
> I hate him, for he is a Christian:
> But more, for that, in low simplicity,
> He lends out money gratis, and brings down
> The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
> If I can catch him once upon the hip,
> I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
> . . . Cursed be my tribe
> If I forgive him.

Before Antonio's bargain with Shylock is made, we learn from Antonio his own opinion of Shylock's morality:

> *Antonio.*—The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
> An evil soul, producing holy witness,
> Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,—
> A goodly apple rotten at the heart;
> Oh! what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

And we learn from the Jew's servant (the Clown) what he thinks of Shylock :—

To be ruled by my conscience I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and to run away from the Jew I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal; and in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew.

The almost constant practice of Shakespeare in relieving the gloom which is cast over the scene by odious characters is strikingly shown in the Merchant of Venice, when Shylock (Act III., Scene 1) meets Salanio and Salarino—

Salanio.—Let me say amen betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer; for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.—

Enter SHYLOCK.

How now, Shylock? what news among the merchants?

Shylock.—You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salarino.—That's certain; I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

Salanio.—And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledg'd; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

Shylock.—She is damn'd for it.

Salarino.—That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

Shylock.—My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salanio.—Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these years?

Shylock.—I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

Salarino.—There is more difference between thy flesh and hers, than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods, than there is between red wine and Rhenish:—But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shylock.—There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto;—a beggar, that used to come so smug upon the mart;—let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer;—let him look to his bond! he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy;—let him look to his bond.

Salarino.—Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh! What's that good for?

Shylock.—To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me of half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? if you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

SCENE III.—VENICE. A STREET.

Enter SHYLOCK, SALANIO, ANTONIO, *and* GAOLER.

Shylock.—Gaoler, look to him; tell not me of mercy;—
This is the fool that lent out money gratis;—
Gaoler, look to him.
Antonio.— Hear me yet, good Shylock.
Shylock.—I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond;
I have sworn an oath, that I will have my bond:
Thou called'st me dog, before thou had'st a cause:
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:
The duke shall grant me justice.—I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.
Antonio.—I pray thee, hear me speak.
Shylock.—I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-ey'd fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond. [*Exit* Shylock.
Salanio.—It is the most impenetrable cur,
That ever kept with men.
Antonio.— Let him alone;
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life; his reason well I know;

I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.

The scene in the Court of Justice is so widely known that citations from it would be superfluous; but it is fitting to point out that Shylock's relentless bearing and his hatred to Antonio are emphasized so as to account for the severity of his punishment.

I can give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio that I follow thus
A losing suit against him.

The trial scene is known to all, and therefore there is no need to repeat it here. Moreover, Portia's hymn to "the quality of mercy" is cited elsewhere in this volume.*

One brief passage which a Transatlantic friend cited (to the author) as the most beautiful of all passages, may perhaps be quoted:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Archbishop Trench remarked in his sermon at Stratford (23rd April, 1864):

In Shakespeare's dialogue, if we set him beside others of his age and time, how little, by comparison with them, is there which we wish

* *Vide* Appendix 1.

away from him, would fain that he had never written. There are some of his contemporaries, whose jewels, when they offer any such, must be plucked out of the very mire; who seem to revel in disgusting images, all which for poor human nature's sake we would willingly put out of sight altogether. What an immeasurable gulf in this matter divides him from them!

Thus Portia, when Gratiano uses a phrase which was not by any means considered coarse in the conversation of society in Queen Elizabeth's days, steps in with the rebuke—"Speak not so grossly."

In As You Like It the Duke avowedly preaches to his audience and to us.

ACT II.—SCENE I.—THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

Enter DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS, *and other* LORDS, *in the dress of Foresters.*

Duke S.—Now, my co-mates, and brothers in exile,
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The seasons' difference; as the icy fang,
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind;
Which when it bites and blows upon my body,
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile, and say,—
This is no flattery: these are counsellors
That feelingly persuade me what I am.
Sweet are the uses of adversity;
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

In All's Well that Ends Well there is a brief sentence which, though it cannot be called a sermon, is nevertheless a grave lesson to teach humility to the boastful.

1 *Lord.*—The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together; our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues.

An American author * sums up Shakespeare's position as a moral and religious teacher thus:—

> In point of fact Shakespeare's work is moral teaching; it is all pure morality; every play is in the strictest sense a powerful sermon.

More than once Shakespeare makes his leading characters shun the craven refuge of suicide in order to escape from the sufferings of this world. Distressed to his inmost soul, Hamlet sighs:

> O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
> Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
> His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
> How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!

Imogen, having been led to the place appointed for her slaughter, bids Pisanio obey his master—

> Against self-slaughter
> There is a prohibition so divine†
> That cravens my weak hand.

In Measure for Measure we have a sermon on mercy, which Archbishop Trench described as "setting forth the

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* "Shakespeare and His Forerunners" (Sidney Lanier), p. 93.

† Hyper-criticism might object to a reference by Imogen in pagan days to a divine prohibition not then known in Britain. But Shakespeare was independent of such checks. All that was human might be called upon to aid Imogen in her distress; and he gave her a nobility of thought surpassing the ideas of those around her. Another spiritual aspiration is attributed to her in Act I., sc. 3, when she deplores that her abrupt severance from Posthumus had prevented her from charging him to encounter her with orisons at certain times, "for then I am in heaven for him." Her resolution against "self-slaughter" is almost in the same words as those which Shakespeare had previously put into Hamlet's mouth:—"Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt. . . . Or that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!"

scheme of our redemption in words as lovely and as exquisite as have ever flowed from the lips of uninspired man."

> Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once,
> And He that might the 'vantage best have took
> Found out the remedy. How would you be
> If He, which is the top of judgment, should
> But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
> And mercy then will breathe within your lips
> Like man new made.

Isabella adds—

> . . . Shall we serve heaven
> With less respect than we do minister
> To our gross selves?

In King John, it is conscience rather than remorse that makes him say (when his warrant for Arthur's murder is produced)—

> O! when the last account 'twixt heaven and earth
> Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
> Witness against us to damnation!

The confession of a criminal is sometimes as instructive as a sermon. What a reproof of the callous ways of the world is given by one of Timon's servants!

> As we do turn our backs
> From our companion thrown into his grave,
> So his familiars to his buried fortunes
> Slink all away; leave their false vows with him
> Like empty purses picked; and his poor self,
> A dedicated beggar to the air,
> With his disease of all-shunned poverty,
> Walks, like contempt, alone.

What a sermon does Timon himself cynically preach upon the "marble-hearted fiend" ingratitude!

Timon.—Who, without those means thou talkest of, did'st thou ever know beloved?

Apemantus.—Myself.

Timon.—I understand thee; thou had'st some means to keep a dog.

Whether Shakespeare used an old saying, or coined a new proverb, in the line (Two Gentlemen of Verona), "To make a virtue of necessity," might be difficult to prove. It is without doubt a proverb now.

What a sermon on hypocrisy is put into the mouth of Richard III.!

> But then I sigh, and with a piece of Scripture,
> Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:
> And thus I clothe my naked villainy
> With old odd ends stolen out of holy writ,
> And seem a saint when most I play the devil.

In Troilus and Cressida what a homily upon disorder does Ulysses preach!

> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets
> In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
> Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
> And make a sop of all this solid globe:
> Strength should be lord of imbecility,
> And the rude son should strike his father dead:
> Force should be right; or, rather, right and wrong,
> (Between whose endless jar justice resides,)
> Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
> Then every thing includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite;
> And appetite, an universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power,
> Must make perforce an universal prey,
> And last eat up himself.

In the same play what trenchant words is the same character made to utter on the ways of the world! They are transcribed here with the more confidence, because an eminent man of science, a judge of the High Court of Justice, declared them to be the finest lines in the whole range of poetry with which he was acquainted.

Ulysses.—Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
A great-sized monster of ingratitudes:
Those scraps are good deeds past: which are devour'd
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon
As done: perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honour bright: to have done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For honour travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast: keep then the path;
For emulation hath a thousand sons,
That one by one pursue: if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
Like to an enter'd tide, they all rush by,
And leave you hindmost;—
Or, like a gallant horse fallen in first rank,
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
O'er-run and trampled on: then what they do in present,
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours:
For time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand;
And with his arms outstretch'd, as he would fly,
Grasps-in the comer: welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,—
That all, with one consent, praise new-born gawds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past;
And give to dust, that is a little gilt,
More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.
The present eye praises the present object:
Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,
That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax;
Since things in motion sooner catch the eye,
Than what not stirs. The cry went once on thee,
And still it might; and yet it may again,
If thou would'st not entomb thyself alive,
And case thy reputation in thy tent;

Whose glorious deeds, but in these fields of late,
Made emulous missions 'mongst the gods themselves,
And drave great Mars to faction.

What a voice of doom is heard from the Prince in Romeo and Juliet!

Capulet! Montagu!
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.

Shakespeare makes Timon complain of the *sermons* which his steward preached to him.

Flavius.— Who is not Timon's?
What heart, head, sword, force, means, but is Lord Timon's?
Great Timon, noble, worthy, royal Timon!
Ah! when the means are gone that buy this praise,
The breath is gone whereof this praise is made:
Feast-won, fast-lost, one cloud of winter showers,
These flies are couched.
Timon.— Come, sermon me no further.

The scoundrel, Iago, well knew the effect of a word in season.

Iago.— Trifles, light as air,
Are to the jealous confirmations strong,
As proofs of holy writ.

What a sermon and a punishment are brought before us in Macbeth! After killing Duncan, and telling Lady Macbeth of the deed, a feeling of horror at the sight of his hands comes over him.

What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnardine,
Making the green—one red.
L. Macbeth.—My hands are of your colour; but I shame
To wear a heart so white. [*Knock.*] I hear a knocking
At the south entry:—retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it then?

But troubles and dangers ensue, and that which seemed so easy in the moment of success becomes the agony and torment of her ghastly life. What seemed so simple to her once, she now vainly essays to do in the sleep-walking trances long-drawn out.

Gentlewoman.—It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands; I have known her continue in this for a quarter of an hour.

L. Macbeth.—Yet here's a spot. Out, damned spot! Out, I say! . . . Yet, who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him? . . . What, will these hands ne'er be clean? . . . Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! oh! oh!

Doctor.—What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged. . . .

L. Macbeth.—Wash your hands. . . . Look not so pale: I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried. He cannot come out of his grave. . . .

Doctor.—More needs she the divine than the physician.

Of this sleep-walking scene, the popular author, W. Carleton, wrote (respecting Lady T. Martin's acting): "To witness it is worth a thousand homilies against murder."

Meanwhile her criminal husband, whom she had nerved to commit his crime, is made more bold by surrounding danger. "How does your patient, doctor?" he says to the physician.

Doctor.—Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.
Macbeth.— Cure her of that:
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doctor.— Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.*
Macbeth.—Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.—

* What a compendious sermon is comprised in these few words!

Come, put mine armour on. . . .
Wherefore was that cry?
Seyton.—The queen, my lord, is dead.
Macbeth.—She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.—
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,†
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

There is one ill-starred character amongst Shakespeare's women, who, enmeshed by the villainies of others, and coarsely reviled by her own misguided husband, remains unprovoked to anger, and humble before her Creator.

Desdemona, in the depth of her distress, utters the prayer—

Heaven me such uses send,
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend.

Even when the drama deals with pagan times Shakespeare introduces a gleam, as it were, of better things.

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† Shakespeare is, of course, open to the charge of borrowing from the Cras hoc fiet, &c., of Persius, but he openly took the words, and did not obscure the fact of the borrowing. Persius was a regular class-book in the Ed. VI. Grammar Schools, and his "Cras hoc fiet, idem cras fiet" has been ennobled by Shakespeare in Macbeth.

Is there in Laertes' speech—"Lay her in the earth, and from her fair and unpolluted flesh may violets spring!"—an echo of Persius? "Nunc non e tumulo fortunataque favilla, Nascentur violæ?"

A classical friend has suggested to the author that in Romeo and Juliet there is an echo from Persius—"Sonat hic de nare canina Littera," when the nurse says to Romeo—

Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?
Romeo.—Ay, nurse, what of that? both with an R.
Nurse.—Ah, mocker, that is the dog's name.

Detestable as are Edmund, Goneril, and Regan, and odious as are their contemplations, it is a relief to the reader to observe the contrast between them and Cordelia, when by the side of her father's couch she breathes the prayer—

> O! you kind gods,
> Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
> The untuned and jarring senses, O! wind up
> Of this child-changed father!

And then—when by means of her devotion, and the physician's skill, his sanity is restored, a battle is fought, and Lear and Cordelia are in the hands of their enemies—a breath from heaven seems to come down when Lear exclaims:

> Come, let's away to prison:
> We two alone will sing like birds in the cage:
> When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
> And ask of thee forgiveness; so we'll live
> And pray, and sing. . . .
> And take upon us the mystery of things,
> As if we were God's spies. . . .
> Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
> The gods themselves throw incense.

Thus, in his dark hours was Lear made to testify that the highest things on earth are those which are acceptable to heaven.

How unaffectedly, with confidence, yet unpresumptuously, does the Countess of Rousillon commend the function of prayer—

> What angel shall
> Bless this unworthy husband? he cannot thrive
> Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear,
> And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath
> Of greatest justice.

As a line in Terence—"Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto"—stirred and took possession of the Roman world, so has Shakespeare's "One touch of nature makes

the whole world kin," become a part of the daily speech of his countrymen.

Tennyson, the poet-laureate in the days of the good Queen Victoria, was wont to say that among the tenderest words in Shakespeare were those of Posthumus to Imogen—

> Hang there like fruit, my soul,
> Till the tree die,

and that Hamlet was the greatest creation in literature that he knew of.

Shakespeare's words—"The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose"—appear to have been echoed by Hooker in the Seventh Book of his "Ecclesiastical Polity":—"No practice so vile, but pretended holiness is made sometime as a cloak to hide it."

If it were possible to increase our horror with regard to Claudius in Hamlet, it would be intensified by his hypocritical statement to Laertes that "No place indeed should murder sanctuarize."

Shakespeare's unrivalled imagination has already been alluded to in these pages, together with the notable homage paid to it by Professor Tyndall, when he said that he thought it "the most wonderful thing in the world."

It is fitting to remember, also, that Shakespeare's power of expressing his thoughts in the most appropriate and musical words was equally rare and marvellous. One eminent writer declared to the author that Shakespeare was the only man who invariably used the best word in the language for the expression of his meaning. Yet the words are always suitable for the occasion.

When the restored Lear, heart-sore and dazed, awakes from his trance, he uses no imperious phrases, as of yore:—

> Do not laugh at me,
> For, as I am a man, I think this lady
> To be my child Cordelia.

In the same spirit Cordelia replies—"And so I am, I am." The pomp and glitter of a Court are out of remembrance, and nature prompts both thought and word.

When the superstitious and ratiocinative Macbeth looks at his hands, crimsoned with the blood of his king, he says:

> What hands are here! Ha! they pluck out mine eyes.
> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No! this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green—one red!

Whether the object in view be harsh or soothing, Shakespeare applies the fit word.

> By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
> Ensuing dangers

he makes one of his characters say, and similar inspiration enabled him to select the fittest, and, when suitable, the most harmonious* word for the occasion.

His imagination supplied the idea, his sense of harmony the form and tone with which he presented his creations to his countrymen.

When he began to write for the stage he had to adopt, as it was popular, the practice of rhyming in many of the speeches of his characters; but when his position was assured he threw away the formality, though he preserved the more essential qualities of harmony and of melody unequalled elsewhere in our language. He makes one of his characters speak of being "lulled with sounds of sweetest melody" and he copiously used it himself.

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* Of course Shakespeare dealt also with contrasts; as when he made Hippolyta say—

> I never heard
> So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

When he was by common consent in a commanding position he could freely choose his subjects, and also the form in which he could best present to his countrymen the fruits of his imagination and of his own sense of harmony.

Some biographers of Shakespeare have professed that they find in Shakespeare's dramas an exposition of the passions of his own mind at the date of the composition of a particular play. They think that he "learned in suffering what he taught in song;" that he was jaundiced when he wrote Timon, and that Timon's cynicism is but Shakespeare's philosophy of life. "Can we doubt (wrote one eminent commentator) that the Hamlets and Timons of Shakespeare's plays represent the side of the dramatist's own character in which lay his peculiar strength, and also his special danger and weakness? An Alcibiades, or a Fortinbras represents that side of his character into which he threw himself for protection against the weakness of excess of passion, or excess of thought."

There seems to be no reason to make Shakespeare the tortured patient when he depicts the sufferings of the good or bad characters whom he puts upon the stage. His imagination was equal to the demand made upon it, in one case as in the other.

Imogen can trample on the insolence of Iachimo, and Isabella can rebuke Angelo, with as much truth to their characters as Cressida displays in her demeanour towards Diomed.

"Shakespeare's men," we are told, "have a history, moral growth, or moral decay; his women act and are acted upon, but seldom grow, and are transformed—he creates his women by a single, strong, or exquisite inspiration; but he studies his men:" some of "his women of intellect are bright, are effective, with ideas which they use as the

means of action or of enjoyment, but among them there is not a female Hamlet."

But we are not told why there should have been a female Hamlet, or a male Imogen, or any similar duplication of Shakespeare's portraits. If we are to take umbrage at Shakespeare for not doing certain things which might have pleased certain critics, our complaints might be many, but would be idle and uninteresting. Without contending that his judgment was never at fault, we may be permitted to doubt whether his censors could improve his work, though it would be rash to insist that he could not have improved it himself if pressure on his time and his theatrical engagements had left him leisure for the purpose.

Many elaborate theories have been made to account for Shakespeare's supremacy in the use of fitting words to express the thoughts inspired by his imagination.

One of them may be glanced at here :—

> Then, when the ear had learned to look for two sounds in each bar,—and particularly for two sounds and a pause in that special bar which terminates the line,—we found that Shakespeare more and more tended to give *three* sounds in that bar—that is, the double-ending line—in order to vary the bar-structure agreeably from its rigid form. . . . We then found that sounds can differ from each other only in four ways, namely, in point of duration, as longer or shorter; in point of pitch, as higher or lower; in point of intensity, as louder or softer; and in point of tone-colour, as flute-colour, violin-colour, horn-colour, reed-colour, and the like.*

To what kind of verse such instruction might lead its disciples it is difficult to conjecture, but it would certainly differ from that of

> Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warbling his native wood notes wild,

in the words of Lorenzo—

> Look how the floor of heaven

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* Shakespeare and his Forerunners, Vol. 2, pp. 243 and 313.

Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

. . . . . .

The man that hath not music* in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus;
Let no such man be trusted.

If the man have "not music in himself," "bar-structure" and "horn-colour" will avail him little in the realms of imagination and expression.

Language may afford materials; but if he be not "to the manner born," his efforts will leave them "like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh."

If a child be born without the sense commonly known as "an ear for music," no teaching of the mysteries of "tone-colour," or "flute-colour," can raise him to the level of Handel or Mozart.

It has become proverbial that *poeta nascitur non fit;* or, as Cicero more eloquently said, "accepimus poetam natura ipsa valere et mentis viribus excitari, et quasi divino quodam spiritu inflari;" and, as we read in Shakespeare, "labouring art can never ransom nature from her inaidable estate."

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* What infinite pathos dwells in poor Ophelia's words:—

And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.

It is for the "spirit divine" which was breathed into Shakespeare that his countrymen should never cease to render thanks to the Almighty.

The copious vocabulary of Shakespeare has been recently commented upon by various writers as far exceeding that of other writers in his own and in later times. Coleridge said, "English has given immortality to Shakespeare, and he has given immortality to English."

The acute James Russell Lowell wrote:

> It may be reckoned one of the rarest pieces of good luck that ever fell to the lot of a race that its most rhythmic genius, its acutest intellect, its profoundest imagination, and its healthiest understanding should have been combined in one man, and that he should have arrived at the full development of his powers at the moment when the material in which he was to work, that wonderful composite called English, the best result of the confusion of languages, was in its freshest perfection.

Coleridge's encomium must, however, be read with due remembrance of the other literary stars of the time of Elizabeth, when foreign spiritual tyranny had been shaken off, and Englishmen became free to speak their own minds, subject only to their country's law.*

The memorable Hooker, Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Raleigh, Chapman, Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Massinger, Otway, Marvell, Waller, Suckling, Wither, Herrick, Shirley, Herbert, Martyn Parker, Harrington, Bacon, Fairfax, and others, the translators of the Bible, the framers of the Book of Common Prayer, including Cranmer, did much to establish a noble standard of language, and the words of many of them are still a power in the land.

Chief among elements which preserve the purity of the language is, of course, the English Bible, which has a world-

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* Less than ten years before the birth of Shakespeare a poor woman was burnt in the author's native county in England by orders from Rome, because an English Bible was found in her house.

wide circulation, not only among members of the Church of England, which promulgated it, but amongst all English-speaking communities. So long as that translation retains its commanding position so long will the well of pure English remain undefiled.

A potent influence is exerted also by Shakespeare, and it may be said without exaggeration that so long as the Bible is revered, and so long as Shakespeare's influence continues, the future of the English language is assured.

Yet what nobler examples of it are there than can be found in Hooker? Let us note one brief sentence, quoted often, but never stale:—

> Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.

It may be said by some who read these pages that no one denies that there are wondrously beautiful thoughts in Shakespeare's works, but there are coarse passages, for which they are bound to condemn him. The contention of such persons deserves respectful consideration. Those among them who are modest will not claim that they themselves are perfect, and will not deny that Shakespeare is entitled to some consideration from his imperfect fellow-creatures.

The author is profoundly conscious that on such a subject he has no claim to be considered a teacher; but some have spoken who were distinguished as teachers, and he may, in the humbler office of herald, adopt and amplify what they have taught.

Archbishop Trench solemnly preached from the pulpit that, "in the world, this Nemesis of life," which Shakespeare "was so careful to trace," "he often reminds us of Scripture, and will indeed repay almost any amount of patient and accurate study which we may bestow upon him."

> Where (said the Archbishop on Macbeth) I sometimes ask myself, as I read, is there a sermon on the need of resisting temptations at the outset, of treading out these sparks of hell before they have set on fire the whole course of nature, like that?

Haud passibus æquis, the author may yet endeavour to follow the course defined by Trench.

Investigators have deemed or ascertained that Shakespeare's first drama was written about 1589, when he was twenty-five years old, and had been acting on the stage for a short but unknown period, and his last drama is assigned to the year 1611.

Speaking of the dramas generally, the Archbishop said:

> In his dialogues, if we set him beside others of his age and time, how little, by comparison with them, is there which we wish away from him, would fain that he had never written. There are some of his contemporaries whose jewels, when they offer any such, must be plucked out of the very mire; who seem to revel in loathsome and disgusting images, all which, for poor human nature's sake, we would willingly put out of sight altogether. What an immeasurable gulf in this matter divides him from them! While of that which we *must* regret even in him, a part we have a right to ascribe to an age, I will not say of less purity, but of less refinement and coarser than our own; and of that which cannot be thus explained, let us at all events remark how separable almost always it is from the context, leaving when thus separated, all which remains perfectly wholesome and pure.

The Archbishop's reasoning on the subject appears so sound that no apology is needed for accepting it in these pages.

Extant letters and recorded conversations of the time prove that even in the highest circles of the 16th century words were in common use, in letters and in speech, which would not now be used by decent people.

No charge can be made against Shakespeare for making his characters use such words. They would not have been intelligible to the auditory of the day if they had not used them, and a recognition of this fact sweeps away many charges made against Shakespeare for allowing his vulgar characters to use vulgar language.

He would have been howled at at the time if he had made them talk euphemistically.

It may be urged, of course, that he could have framed his dramas in such a manner as to do away with the need for introducing coarse or objectionable characters. To this it is sufficient to reply that if he had so framed them they would have been inconsistent with nature, and therefore unnatural, although the object of the drama "both at the first and now was, and is, to hold the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of which one must, in your allowance, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others."

That Shakespeare's pages are pure in comparison with those of his contemporaries is admitted by his critics. Ought he to have made them more free from the prevalent coarseness (as it appears to us in the 20th century) of the age he lived in?

Those who think themselves faultless will of course declare that he ought. More modest critics may think that Shakespeare might be a better judge than they on such a

question, especially when they reflect that by his method he made virtue amiable and vice the more odious in contrast, and that there was, in the opinion of Archbishop Trench (by reason of his manner of doing so), an "immeasurable gulf" in the matter between him and some of his contemporaries.

All must admit that he laid a heavy hand upon the vicious, and painted in amaranthine colours the characters of the good. In the microcosms created by his imagination the good find honour, and the bad find shame. But it may be said, "Can it be contended that Shakespeare did not err—did not commit improprieties?" Far from it. He would read Shakespeare with poor judgment who could so contend. Shakespeare himself taught (in an early poem published by himself)—

> But no perfection is so absolute,
> That some impurity doth not pollute.

and no disciple can prosper who would mangle his teacher's maxims. The author is framing no new doctrine for the present need. More than forty years ago, when labouring (happily with success) to promote the establishment of a Shakespeare scholarship in the University of Melbourne,* he said (in a lecture):

> "Shakespeare earned his livelihood by picturing mankind. Witty rogues there were in the world, and he showed them, but he was not bound to conduct them to triumph, and he punished them.
>
> Amidst his creations, with reverence be it spoken, he sits like an overruling Providence, and deals even-handed Justice to all. As they sow, they reap.

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* It is perhaps pardonable to record here that the council (the governing body of the University of Melbourne), in accepting in 1864 the foundation of the scholarship, thanked the author "for his praiseworthy exertions in this matter." The author, it may be added, was at the time a member of the council of the University.

Let us read him with affectionate respect. We need not justify every line he wrote: though even on the score of delicacy of language his writings put to the blush, not only the plays of his time, but the phrases which abounded amongst the euphuists of Queen Elizabeth's court. He could but mould, not create the public taste. He felt the difficulty of pleasing the public and at the same time doing justice to that light from heaven, which burned within him. Hear what, in his own person, he says in one of his Sonnets (cxi.):

> Oh! for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
> The guilty Goddess of my harmful deeds;
> That did not better for my life provide,
> Than public means which public manners breeds;
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
> And, almost, thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.
> Pity me then, and wish I were renewed.
> Whilst like a willing patient I will drink
> Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection;
> No bitterness that I will bitter think,
> No double penance to correct correction.

Let us not judge rashly what was written with such a sense of responsibility. Let us fathom, if we can, the great and good purpose which pervades his works. Doing this, we shall find him our pleasantest boon companion, most genial instructor, and our wisest friend.

His pleasantry spans our landscape like the many-coloured arch:—wisdom is let loose from his lips like raindrops; there is no virtue which is not freshened by his praise, no vice which is not made more hideous by his frown."

In another sonnet (cx.) there is a brief reference which may or may not refer to Shakespeare's repugnance to some phases of his stage-life—

> Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motley to the view,
> Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
> Made old affections of affections new;
> Most true it is that I have look'd on truth
> Askance and strangely."

The contention in these pages is not that Shakespeare was in all respects perfect, but that his main purpose was sound and good, and that, rightly taken, his teaching is profitable. There may be something wrong in the appetites of those who can gather no honey in his fields.

At the same time it must be admitted that the yearning which found expression in his cxi. sonnet may be cited to prove that sometimes Shakespeare consciously offended.

It may be so. No one contends that he was perfect. Nor did he ever arrogate for himself in his own person the position of a moral and religious teacher.

One of his characters indeed, according to Archbishop Trench, "set forth the scheme of our redemption in words as lovely and as exquisite as have ever flowed from the lips of uninspired man," but his own tongue and pen—if ever used in self-defence against detractors—have handed down no personal apology for his shortcomings or misdoings.

Still he was not without a witness, and previous pages have shown that his favour with Queen Elizabeth and King James, his familiarity with the Earl of Southampton, his friendship with the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery and others, his recognition by men of high reputation, and the universal testimony of his friends (so far as it has come down to us), imply that his private character was estimable and beloved. Had it been otherwise the puritan Milton, born in Shakespeare's life-time, would hardly have hailed him in his early poem, "L'Allegro," as "Sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child."

Those who carp at Shakespeare as not so good as he ought to have been may have reason on their side, but should remember also that "all the souls that were were forfeit once," and that the remedy is found not in the maledictions of man, but in the mercy of God. If it be the duty of the

biographer to "extenuate" nothing, it is equally his duty to "set down nought in malice."

In his shortcomings and ill deeds Shakespeare had many brethren, and they should remember the fact. "The greater scorn the lesser," and who can claim superiority to Shakespeare?

Without blindness to his faults we have all great cause for thankfulness that one so inspired as he, was vouchsafed to England to adorn her literature and ennoble the thoughts of his countrymen so long as their language shall endure.

That he did much in this regard can be denied by none, and who is he, wise in his own conceit, who will dare to pronounce that he could have done more?

If only they who are themselves perfect can hurl reproaches against Shakespeare he cannot have many assailants.

It is possible that some writers who have never read Shakespeare have joined in denouncing him. Such denouncers may be reminded of the words of Shakespeare's first editors—Heminge and Condell, in 1623—"Read him, therefore, and again and again; and if then you do not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger not to understand him."

It is difficult at any period for critics to put themselves at the standpoint of judgment essential to a period removed from them by past centuries. Milton's opinions with regard to Shakespeare emphasize this difficulty for our instruction. None can accuse Milton of tampering with truth in order to snatch at temporary approval or success.

Born during Shakespeare's life-time, his mind was nourished in childhood by Shakespeare's. He cannot be deemed ignorant of the moral and social tendencies and current intelligence of the age.

The noble lines in which he sang the praise of Shakespeare form the prologue to this volume. They may also serve as its epilogue. It is fitting that its first and last words should be couched in his language.

A humble attempt has been made in these pages to depict Shakespeare as a teacher, loyal to his country and his God. In closing this brief tribute to his imagination and his power of expression, it is a supreme pleasure to recall his praise as a poet, sung by his great contemporary, Milton.

APPENDIX I.

(See note, pp. 6, 230.)

A friend of the author has frequently suggested to him that it might be well to include in this volume some refutation of the silly idea that Lord Bacon was the author of Shakespeare's Plays. But so much has been published on the subject that any refutation of it in detail would be wearisome to readers, and would be an intolerable occupation for the writer. Nevertheless, as Lord Bacon, ungifted with imagination, did once invade the realm of rhyme, it may perhaps be well to give some idea of the power he displayed.

The sort of Prologue which was deemed worthy of being spoken at the Inner Temple before Queen Elizabeth in the decade in which Lord Bacon was born may be estimated by the following lines:—

Full thirty years in woful wise afflicted he had been,
All which long time he took no food, but forced against his will,
Even with a spoon to pour some broth his teeth between,
And though they sought by force this wise to feed him still,
He always strove with all his might the same on ground to spill.

How many Prologues of such calibre Bacon may have heard must be left to conjecture. Their influence must have been strong upon him, or his want of imagination must have blinded him to their defects; for when he tried to write poetry himself he vied with them in doggrel.

In an evil hour for himself and his idolators he published, in 1625, a "Translation of Certain Psalms into English Verse by the Right Hon. Francis Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Alban." It is not too much to say that his so-called "English Verse" robbed the Psalms of the rhythm and dignity which they already possessed in the English authorized version. Let a few specimens be glanced at:—

Psalm I.

With wicked men it is not so,
Their lot is of another kind:
All as the chaff which to and fro
Is toss'd at mercy of the wind.
And when he shall in judgment plead,
A casting sentence bide he must:
So shall he not lift up his head
In the assembly of the just.

For why? the Lord hath special eye,
  To be the godly's stay at call:
And has given over, righteously,
  The wicked man to take his fall.

PSALM XII.

And now thou wilt not first thy word forsake,
  Nor yet the righteous man that leans thereto,
But wilt his safe protection undertake,
  In spite of all their force and wiles can do.
And time it is, O Lord, thou didst draw nigh;
  The wicked daily do enlarge their bands;
And that which makes them follow ill a vie
  Rule is betaken to unworthy hands.

PSALM CIV.

But who can blaze thy beauties, Lord, aright?
They turn the brittle beams of mortal sight.
Upon thy head thou wear'st a glorious crown,
All set with violets, polished with renown.

. . . . . .

This earth as with a veil once covered was,
The waters overflowed all the mass;
But upon his rebuke away they fled,
And then the hills began to show their head.

. . . . . .

And that the earth no more might drowned be,
He set the sea his bounds of liberty,
And though his waves resound and beat the shore,
Yet it is bridled by his holy lore.
Then did the rivers seek their proper places,
And found their heads, their issues, and their races.

. . . . . .

The asses wild that hide in wilderness,
Do thither come their thirst for to refresh.

. . . . . .

There hast thou set the great leviathan,
That makes the seas to seethe like boiling pan.
All these do ask of thee their meat to live,
Which in due season thou to them dost give.

Surely Bacon's own friends, if he have any, gifted with a sense of imagination and of the beauty which dwells in harmony of words, cannot demean themselves so far as to think that the author of the above halting corruption of the authorized version of the Psalms was also the creator of the harmonies which abound in Shakespeare.

It is so repulsive to transcribe Bacon's doggrel that to sweeten this page it is proper to include in it a few of Shakespeare's own words,

which, though often quoted, cannot be quoted too often. Their music is an anodyne for those who have been tortured by Bacon's "jarring discords."

> The quality of mercy is not strained,
> It droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
> 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
> The throned monarch better than his crown;
> His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
> The attribute to awe and majesty,
> Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
> But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
> It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
> It is an attribute to God himself;
> And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
> When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
> Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
> That in the course of justice none of us
> Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
> And that same prayer should teach us all to render
> The deeds of mercy.

The tender mercies of his friends were cruel to the experimental philosopher, when they claimed for him the highest gift of imagination in regions which were not dreamt of in his philosophy. He, at any rate, was no accomplice in making claims so baseless, and so much out of harmony with his well-known character and performances. Requiescat. He had his own style, and Shakespeare had another. The learned James Spedding, the author of "Life and Letters of Bacon," 1876, who edited Bacon's works, expressed his own opinion thus:—"I doubt whether there are five lines together to be found in Bacon which could be mistaken for Shakespeare, or five lines in Shakespeare which could be mistaken for Bacon by one who was familiar with their several styles and practised in such observations" (London "Times," 23rd December, 1901).

If the serious verdict of a learned critic be required in these pages, it is, perhaps, proper to cite that of Mr. Spedding.*

* The extracts from Bacon's verses are taken from vol. vii. of the "Works of Francis Bacon, . . . by James Spedding, M.A., Trin. Coll., Cambridge, and others." As reference has been made to Spedding, it is perhaps proper to note that Sir Theodore Martin (in "Blackwood's Magazine," February, 1888) cited the following words, written by Spedding:—"To ask me to believe that Bacon was the author of these plays is like asking me to believe that Lord Brougham was the author not only of Dickens' works, but of Thackeray's and Tennyson's besides. That the author of 'Pickwick' was Charles Dickens

APPENDIX II.

(See note, p. 12.)

The text might have been made to seem more cogent if an unpublished document, communicated to the author by permission, had been inserted at page 12. It was communicated to the author by one whom he has the happiness to call his friend—Alfred H. Huth, Esq., owner of the famous Huth Library.

The writer of it is the learned A. F. Leach, Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, &c., who writes that if the boys in an Ed. VI. Grammar School (temp. Shakespeare)—

did really master their classics in the way Hoole says, and (though it reads like a fairy story) we are bound to believe that, published as an actual course of study by a practical schoolmaster, it was not only possible, but actual, the less we hear of the impossibility of Shakespeare having written Shakespeare because he left school at fifteen the better. . . . At ten they learnt the Assembly's Catechism in Greek . . . the Greek grammar of Camden . . . and wrote "all sorts of English and Latin verses" and familiar and elegant epistles. In the Fifth Form, age eleven, they did daily a dozen verses of Greek Testament and extracts from the historians. They got a perfect knowledge of Greek syntax over Isocrates, and translated Psalms from English to Latin and Latin to Greek, and compared their version with the Septuagint. They began Rhetoric in the form of speeches. . . . Virgil's Eclogues they were to read; at first ten or twelve lines, and then a whole Eclogue at a time; and on Thursday afternoon to turn Greek epigrams into Latin and English verses. . . . The Sixth Form, only twelve to thirteen, made themes, orations, declamations in English, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew."

These particulars relate to the Ed. VI. Grammar School at Rotheram, of which Hoole was the master. The course at Stratford may have been similar or dissimilar. No particulars with regard to it have been handed down to us. But Mr. Leach arrives at the conclusion that "Shakespeare would have found quite as good a classical training at Stratford-on-Avon as at Rugby (and indeed at that epoch much better)."

It may be well to call attention to the fact that Mr. Leach says that

---

I know upon no better authority than that upon which I know that the author of Hamlet was a man called William Shakespeare; and in what respect is the one more difficult to believe than the other? . . . If you had fixed upon anybody else rather than Bacon, as the true author, anybody of whom I knew nothing, I should have been scarcely less incredulous. But if there were any reason for supposing that the real author was somebody else, I think I am in a condition to say that whoever it was, it was not Francis Bacon. The difficulties which such a supposition would involve would be innumerable and altogether insurmountable."

Shakespeare "left school at fifteen." It is true that he cites no authority as evidence of the fact. Neither did Mr. Calmour or Mr. Sidney Lee cite any authority for their surmise that Shakespeare left school at an earlier period. Apparently there is no more evidence that Shakespeare remained at the Stratford School till his fifteenth or sixteenth year than there is for the presumption that he quitted it in his fourteenth year. It is idle to make an assumption and then base an argument upon it, for such an argument is tainted by presumption.

It is interesting to picture to one's mind the Shakespeares, father and son, congenially bent upon promoting the son's intellectual progress, and therefore prolonging his stay at the Stratford School.

As an exercise of fancy what can be more interesting than to imagine a Winter Night's colloquy between John Shakespeare and his son? The father with reminiscences of his own patronage of the drama in Stratford; the son with his Venus and Adonis ("first heir of his invention") in his hand, and high dramatic conceptions in his imagination.

That the father or son would desire to cut short the son's opportunity of literary study may be rejected as a baseless supposition. That they never reasoned together about his present or future literary prospects is manifestly improbable, though there is no extant testimony that they did so reason.

Whatsoever may have been their colloquies, their highest anticipations must have been more than realized in a few short years, when the fame and fortune of the son made him the observed of all observers, and banished carking care from the Shakespeare hearths.

But biography must be content with recorded facts, and if no fresh facts can be adduced we must be content with the knowledge that his "Venus and Adonis" (whether written while he was at the School or afterwards) was the "first heir of his invention," and that when he was eighteen years old he was married in the Stratford Church in 1582 to Anne Hathaway, daughter of Richard Hathaway, a respectable freeholder at Shottery, in the immediate vicinity of Stratford: that children were born to him, and christened in the Stratford Church, and that, at a date not precisely recorded, he quitted his native place, and (no doubt with his MSS. in his hand) found his way to London, and through his Stratford friends, Field and Burbage, sought and found the means of putting his dramatic works before the public, having himself in the meantime, according to Chettle's opinion (published in 1582), become "excellent in the quality" of an actor, and in his "facetious grace in writing." The signal patronage of Shakespeare by the Earl of Southampton in 1593 and 1594 is recorded in the second Chapter of this volume.

APPENDIX III.

(See Note, p. 38.)

1588-9.	Love's Labour's Lost
1588-9.	Titus Andronicus (part of it attributed to Shakespeare)
1588-9.	Comedy of Errors
1590.	Midsummer Night's Dream
1590-2.	Two Gentlemen of Verona
1590-2.	Henry VI.—Part 1. Parts 2 and 3 subsequently
1591-3.	Romeo and Juliet
1593-4.	Richard II.
1594.	Richard III.
1594.	King John
1596.	Merchant of Venice
1596-7.	Taming of the Shrew
1596-7.	Henry IV.—Part 1
1597-8.	Henry IV.—Part 2
1598-9.	Merry Wives of Windsor
1599.	Henry V.
1613.	Henry VIII.
1599-600.	Much Ado about Nothing
1600.	As You Like It
1601.	Twelfth Night
1601-2.	All's Well that Ends Well
1602-3.	Hamlet
1603.	Measure for Measure
1601-3.	Julius Cæsar
1604.	Othello
1605-6.	Macbeth
1605-6.	King Lear
1606-7.	Troilus and Cressida
1606-7.	Antony and Cleopatra
1607-8.	Coriolanus
1607-8.	Timon of Athens
1608.	Pericles
1610-2.	Cymbeline
1611.	Winter's Tale
1611.	The Tempest

N.B.—The order in which the Plays were produced has been much discussed. The above list is merely given as a complete list of the Plays, without any pretence to settle the order of their production.

ERRATUM.

Page 62, three lines from bottom, for "Jonson" read "Johnson."

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